

# The Tartan Telegraph

## The Alex Sutherland Memorial Concert



By J. Beau Buffington

A musical memorial to celebrate the life of Alex Sutherland took place in Wildwood, Missouri on April 19, 2008. Taking part in the concert were many musicians, music fans and friends from around the Midwest whose lives had been touched by Alex.

*The drive from I-44 to Wildwood was a beautiful journey – I felt as if we had stepped outside the monotony of a much improved, yet still uneventful, drive on I-44 from Springfield to St. Louis into a verdure landscape of rugged beauty.*

The venue for the concert was the spacious, beautiful and acoustically superb New Community Church. Participants included The John Ford and St. Louis Caledonia pipe bands; Peter Wollenberg (official ‘Cronie’ from Sutherland’s musical flock); Diane McCollough SPAE representative; Beau Buffington, piper to the

St. Andrew’s Society of Springfield and many others.

*I learned a Robert Burns song called “A Man’s A Man for A’ That” because it was one that I heard Alex sing, and it seemed a fitting tribute to such a remarkable person. Also, I was pretty confident that no one else would perform the song. It is a difficult song to learn, according to Jim Malcolm, mainly because it doesn’t follow the usual narrative structure of songs but contains more abstract ideological themes and many semantic pitfalls with the Broad-Scots dialect of Burns’ day.*

Prior to his performance of Burns’ song, Buffington recounted a favorite anecdote of Alex – the answer to the question of why Sutherland wore a kilt. “There are many, many accidents each year caused by putting on bifurcated garments. Wear-

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### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Mark Your Calendar Now!

#### May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2008

Pat’s Clogging Studios and Celtic Fire with Beau Buffington, 2-4 pm.  
 Library Station, Springfield, MO

#### June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2008

Bannockburn Ceilidh, Riverside Inn

#### September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2008

Jim Malcolm, Buffalo Old City Park

#### September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2008

Buffalo Celtic Festival at Old City Park

ing a kilt is just a matter of safety for me!”

*Before I heard Alex perform this song, it was a melody that only existed as notes on the dusty, yet well-worn pages of the Scots Guard collection of bagpipe music. Alex had literally breathed new life into this song for me, which celebrates the equality of all people above rank, wealth or social position. (The lyrics are reprinted on page 4.)*

The musical memorial was concluded with an audience sing-along of a medley of Alex’s favorite songs, including Work O’ the Weavers, Hebridean Shore and Flower O’ Scotland. It was a humorous yet heartfelt conclusion to an afternoon honoring a man who had brought humor and joy to so many. Many thanks to the event organizers for a wonderful afternoon.

## Canmore's™ Revenge

or Hide-N-Go-Nessie!

By J. Beau Buffington

The hurried breathing that normally accompanied Highland piping practice had become labored and abnormally deliberate. Legs shook with every breath almost to the point of collapse. "I'm getting too old for this," I solemnly told my wife one evening. "Can I even call myself a piper anymore?"

Coupled with the stress of preparation for piping at the inauguration of the Todd Parnell, new president of Drury University, and it was a recipe for silent self-condemnation and irrepressible introspection. "What's wrong with me?" I asked myself.

Just then it dawned on me: time to take my pipe bag into the bathtub and see if the synthetic Gore-tex® Nessie blew bubbles in the telltale sign of a leaky bag! Drones

and chanter removed and stocks corked, the curve of her neck spouted furiously even before her serpentine neck made contact with the water. Eureka! I'd found it! A hole in her internal seam nearly six inches long! How many



Leaky pipe bag or  
Nessie surfacing near Mt. Fuji?

performances had I wrestled with her ravenous appetite for my breath: the more I gave, the more she took!

No time to order another. I would have to cannibalize another new bag recently installed by myself onto another bagpipe – a lovely set of Macpherson pipes acquired by a friend on a trip to Edinburgh in 1978. A quick switch of bags soon yielded dramatic changes in Nessie's destructive urges: her unwieldy hunger for my lung power was tamed. Chest soon triumphed over primitive, mythical beast and piping became as easy as breathing, just as it was in my youth. Now, I could play for the inauguration blowing proudly and legs holding firm!

**Editor's note: This anecdote is not an endorsement of the Canmore™ pipe bag. However, the last one I bought was over ten years ago, so it's one of the best \$125 bucks I ever spent.**

## Piobaireachd 101

By J. Beau Buffington

Piobaireachd ("pē'-bräk") is Scottish Gaelic for 'pipe music' and is the original form of music for the Highland bagpipe. The MacCrimmon family from the Isle of Skye, pipers to the Clan MacLeod, are generally given credit for developing the technique, structure and music of piobaireachd. The structure of piobaireachd consists of the urlar, which is the basic melody, and progressively more complicated variations including the siubhal, dithis, taorluath, crunluath and a spectacular, ten-gracenote embellishment called the crunluath-a-mach. Yearly contests at the Argyllshire Gathering at Oban and the Northern Meeting at Inverness have become the musical litmus test for the world standard of piobaireachd players from around the globe. Provocative tune names like Too Long in this Condition, I Got a Kiss of the King's Hand and Squinting Patrick's Flame of Wrath create a musical mystique that is an obsession for countless fans of Scottish traditional music. Future issues of the Tartan Telegraph will present a piobaireachd -of-the-season with a history lesson directly from the pages of Alexander J. Haddow's *The Structure and History of Piobaireachd*. Haddow was a brilliant scientist and scholar from Glasgow, Scotland. By some coincidence, he was also the father of new society members Dr. Alistair and Melissa Haddow.

## Tartan of the Season

John Paul Jones was born in Kirkcudbright, Scotland in 1747. After a maritime career commencing at the age of 13, Jones became a Revolutionary War hero and is now considered the father of the American navy. His mother was a member of the clan MacDuff, and her tartan is shown in the title bar.

## Bagpipes, Tartan & Insurance

### Scottish-American Fraternalism in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

by Todd Wilkinson

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, many American males were members of a myriad of fraternal organizations – the Masons, Odd Fellows, Knights of Pythias, the Grand Army of the Republic, etc. Besides the social camaraderie and entertainment that these organizations provided, many joined for mutual-aid benefits, such as insurance, old-age homes, etc, and in the case of immigrant organizations, to maintain a social and cultural link to the “auld country”. While many St. Andrews and Caledonian Societies still exist in the United States today, during the fraternal “craze” of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, several organizations with a Scottish “theme” were organized in the United States and Canada.

#### The Benevolent Order of Scottish Clans

A lesser known fraternal organization, the Benevolent Order of Scottish Clans, or BOSC, was founded in St. Louis, Missouri, On St. Andrew's Day, 1878 (although some sources give a later date of 1882) by James McCash and a number of fellow freemasons.

Besides being a social order for Scots and Scottish-Americans, the Order also was a mutual aid society that provided insurance to its members, since many businesses did not provide it for their employees. Mutual-aid societies

also provided relief for the widow and orphan, tended the sick and buried the dead.

The ritual of the BOSC was based on the story of the Battle of Largs in 1263, and the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314. The emblem of the BOSC was the Scottish thistle, and the motto, *Nemo Me Impune Lacessit*.

In addition, the BOSC served a similar purpose to the Caledonian and St. Andrew's Society – preserving Scottish heritage and customs in the New World, as well as providing social events for members. Clan Stewart No. 50 in Duluth, Minnesota, for example, would hold an annual summer picnic at Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. Members were ferried to the site of the Picnic on the banks of Lake Superior for a day-long celebration of all things Scottish, including dancing, piping and Highland games.

Wayne Rethford and June Skinner Sawyers, in their book *The Scots of Chicago: Quiet Immigrants and Their New Society*, tell of “Scotland Day”, which was held in Chicago on September 30, 1933. The BOSC took a leading role in this celebration, which consisted of performances by local pipe bands, and the Essex Scottish Regiment Pipes & Drums from Canada, as well as Highland dancing, readings and

speeches by local Scottish-American dignitaries.

Each lodge took the name of a Scottish clan; in the “Grand Clan of Missouri”, there was Clan Campbell No. 1, Clan Douglas No. 3, Clan MacDonald No. 6, etc. The National organization was referred to as the “Royal Clan”, which met in convention every two years. At one time, the national headquarters were in Boston, Massachusetts. In 1971, the BOSC merged with the International Order of Foresters.

#### Daughters of Scotia

There was also a ladies auxiliary of the BOSC, the Daughters of Scotia, which was organized in 1895, in New Haven, Connecticut. Originally a number of male members of the Order of Scottish Clans were dual members of the DOS until the organization was up and running.

Like the BOSC, the Daughters also placed a strong emphasis on Scottish culture, history and traditions. Only wives, daughters, mothers, sisters and widows of BOSC members could join. The DOS is organized similar to the BOSC, for obvious reasons.

#### The Sons of Scotland

In Canada, a similar order and mutual aid society, the Sons of Scotland, was founded in 1876 and is very active across the

(Continued on the next page)

country. The first camp, Robert Burns No. 1, was organized in Toronto, on June 27 of that year. By 1892, over 70 camps had been formed, with a membership of some 6,000 individuals. Besides insurance, the "camp doctor" provided free medical care (save surgeries and childbirth) to all members.

Sons of Scotland "camps" are located from Vancouver to Montreal, and organize Burns and St. Andrew's Suppers, ceilidhs, picnics, etc. The order also has a pipe band, The Sons of Scotland Pipes & Drums, which is reportedly Canada's oldest civilian pipe band, organized in 1896.

Simon Fraser University maintains archives of the records of the Sons of Scotland from 1895-1998.

While the Benevolent Order of Scottish Clans is no longer around today, traces of its heyday can still be seen, mostly in its surviving auxiliary, the Daughters of Scotland, and in the occasional grave marker in a cemetery or a membership medal in an antique store. Yet it can also be argued that the legacy of the BOSC is the numerous Scottish clan societies that dot the United States & Canada and continue the work of promoting Scottish heritage & culture at Highland Games and other Scottish events.

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["http://www.sonsofscotland.com/index.html"](http://www.sonsofscotland.com/index.html) [h](#)

Sons of Scotland Pipes & Drums:  
<http://www.sospb.com/index.html>

## A Man's A Man for A' That

Is there for honest poverty  
That hings his heid an aa that?  
The couard slave we pass him  
by,  
We daur be puir for aa that  
For aa that, an aa that  
Our toils obscure an aa that  
The rank is but the guinea-stamp  
The man's the gowd for aa that

Whit though on hamely fare we  
dine  
Wear hoddan gray an aa that?  
Gie fules their silks an knaves  
their wine  
A man's a man for aa that  
For aa that, an aa that  
Their tinsel show an aa that

The honest man though e'er sae  
puir  
Is king o men for aa that

Ye see yon birkie caad a laird  
Wha struts an stares an aa that  
Though hunders worship at his  
word

He's but a cuif for aa that  
For aa that, an aa that  
His riband star an aa that  
The man o independent mind  
He looks an lauchs at aa that

A prince can mak a beltit knight  
A marquis, duke an aa that  
But an honest man's abune his  
might

Guid faith, he maunna faa that  
For aa that, an aa that  
Their dignities an aa that  
The pith o sense an pride o  
worth  
Are higher rank than aa that

Then lat us pray that come it may  
As come it will for aa that  
That sense an worth ower aa the  
earth  
Sall bear the gree an aa that  
For aa that, an aa that  
It's comin yet for aa that  
That man tae man the hale warl  
ower  
Sall brithers be for aa that

## Kilt Night At Galloway Station



Del Wiese and Tim Robertson

The second kilt night took place at Galloway Station on Monday, May 12th. Approximately fifty spectators attended, and seven kilted revelers donned the tartan garment in defiance of wearing the riskier bifurcated, and less-ventilated alternative.

By some ironic turn-of-events, the one piper present did NOT wear a kilt, mumbling something about it being at the cleaners or some equally lame excuse.

Joining the kilt-wearers were members of the St. Andrew's Society of Springfield. Also pre-

sent were members of Galloway Crossing, who perform traditional Scottish and Irish music at Galloway Station every Monday from 7 - 9 pm.

The Society's own Todd Wilkinson related a humorous story to the delight of the numerous spectators.

The next kilt night is tentatively planned to maximize participation of all available kilt wearers and also to publicize the Bannockburn Ceilidh which will take place on June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2008 at the Riverside Inn in Ozark, Missouri.

### CD Review

#### Jim Malcolm: *Acquaintance*

for a love song is often Burns tenderly saying "goodbye". Apparently jolly confections are actually damning diatribes. Songs about drinking, however, are actually songs about drinking.

Malcolm's delicately picked guitar is central, and it is variously embroidered by his own harmonica or the fiddle of Pete Clark. Fraser Stone of Malcolm's former band, Old Blind Dogs, occasionally adds percussion. Malcolm's wife, Susie, takes the lead vocal on 'The Ploughman' and shares a duet with her husband on 'The Shepherd's Wife'.

Malcolm's enunciation of the Scots dialect allows the untutored to hear each unfamiliar word clearly and thus enjoy the

words for their sonic beauty. It is as pleasurable as seeing an animal in its natural habitat even if you don't know what it is.

This album is wonderfully paced, with tempo and density of arrangement varying enough so that each track stands out distinctly, and yet there are no jarring transitions. Malcolm reveres Burns, but is not overawed by his legacy.

The spare, modern treatments of these songs are like a renovation of an 18-century cottage that reveals the timeless beauty of the architecture and gives you central heating too.

**Bill Chaisson (Trumansburg, NY)**



JIM MALCOLM  
sings songs of Robert Burns

Reprinted from *Dirty Linen*  
August/September 2007

This is a bucolic album full of blooming hillsides, fresh-turned earth, marshy dingles, and twittering birds. Malcolm's relaxed take on the songs of Robert Burns fits these buoyantly sad narratives.

As his liner notes point out, what the casual listener takes