

# The 26th Nicol-Brown Amateur Invitational Piping Competition

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OCTOBER 11, 2008  
ST. ANDREW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
ALBANY, NEW YORK  
USA

## What a weekend!

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2008**

■ *Solo Piping Concert and Reception*

7:00 - 9:00 pm at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church  
10 N. Main Avenue, Albany, New York 12203

The 2008 Nicol-Brown competitors and judges will be introduced, and tune selections for the contest will be announced. Professional pipers Bobby Minnear, Andrew Douglas and Iain MacDonald will perform a wide variety of music in concert.

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2008**

■ *Master Class*

10:00 am - 12:00 noon at the Invermark Piping Studio  
91 Puckertoot Road, Petersburg, New York 12138

Nicol-Brown competitors will have an open lesson with judges Bobby Minnear and Iain MacDonald, who will explain highlights of the contest and give valuable instructions for any pipers wanting to improve their musicianship.

■ *Set Tunes Seminar*

1:00 - 4:00 pm at the Invermark Piping Studio  
91 Puckertoot Road, Petersburg, New York 12138

Donald Lindsay, Iain MacDonald, and Bobby Minnear will lead a session on the Gold and Silver Medal tunes for 2009. This class is appropriate for judges and advanced pipers.

ALL EVENTS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC, THANKS TO THE EUSPBA AND OTHER GENEROUS SPONSORS OF THE NICOL-BROWN. DONATIONS ARE WELCOME! TO ATTEND A SUNDAY WORKSHOP, PLEASE CALL MAUREEN CONNOR: 518-374-6034 OR 518-986-6034.

## need more piobaireachd?

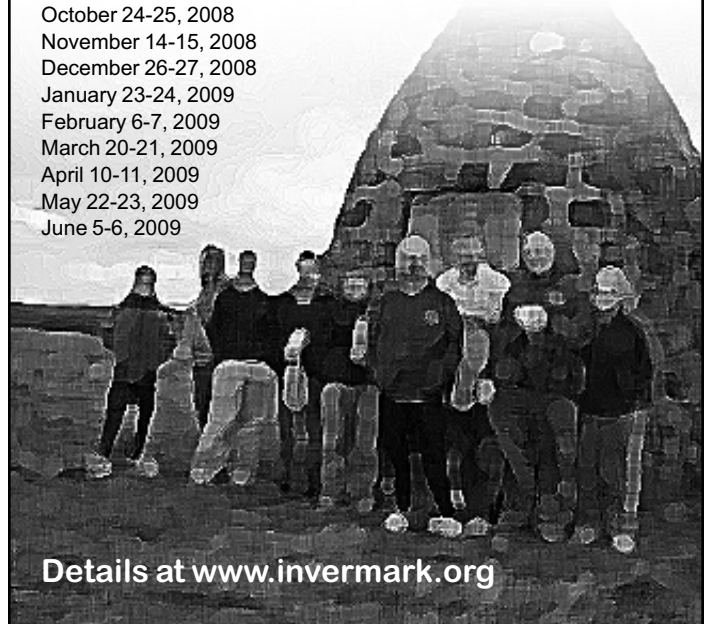


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The Nicol-Brown committee is pleased to welcome the judges for 2008:

# Iain MacDonald, Robert Minnear, and Nancy Tunncliffe

**I**AIN MACDONALD WAS COMPELLED TO BEGIN PIPING in 1965, and he has thanked his mother many times for her "encouragement." He played in local bands in Regina, Saskatchewan and attended the Fort San summer school, where he was able to take lessons from P/M Donald MacLeod, M.B.E. In 1978 and '81, Iain lived in Scotland, where he took weekly lessons from Donald MacLeod. Later, Iain was a student of James McMillan of Burnaby, British Columbia for a number of years.



Iain competed with the Babcock-Renfrew Pipe Band under P/M Iain McLeod for two seasons, and won prizes at all the major championships. From 1985 through '91, Iain played with the Simon Fraser University Pipe Band, and in 2007 spent a season with the ScottishPower Pipe Band. Iain has been pipe major of the Grade 2 City of Regina Pipe Band since he founded the band in 1992. He has also formed and teaches a junior band program at the Conservatory of Performing Arts, University of Regina.

Iain makes his living teaching piping and doing freelance communications work. He holds the Graduate Certificate and the Senior Teacher's Certificate from the Institute of Piping, and is on the Board of Examiners for the Piping and Drumming Qualifications Board. Over the years, Iain has recorded CDs with pipe bands, folk groups, and for Highland dancing, and has contributed many articles to piping magazines. In August 2008, he published a collection of pipe music entitled *Along the Road*.



**B**OBBY MINNEAR BEGAN PIPING IN 1978 AFTER TAKING A trip to Scotland with his grandmother. He was first taught by Albert McMullin and started attending the Balmoral schools in 1979, both in North Carolina and Edinboro, Pennsylvania. Bobby was primarily taught by Jim McIntosh, Murray Henderson, and Donald Lindsay.

Bobby competed in the first three Nicol-Brown competitions and won the event in 1984. In 1985, Bobby began competing at the Professional level and joined the Clan MacFarlane Pipe Band under the leadership of Ken Eller. He competed in the Silver Medal at the Argyllshire Gathering in 1986. In 1987, Bobby joined the

Toronto Police Pipe Band under the leadership of Jake Watson and played with the band until 1990. He then left the piping world to pursue a Master's degree in Computer Science at Purdue University. After spending nearly 15 years working with Silicon-Valley-based Internet startups, Bobby began piping again. He competed with the City of Washington Pipe Band in 2006 and 2007 and is competing in the Professional solo events. He won the Stone Mountain USPF regional qualifier last fall and placed 2nd and 4th in the 2008 USPF in the MSR and Piobaireachd events. Bobby is current Vice President of Software at an Atlanta-based networking startup. He and his wife, Helen, have three children, Sarah, Megan, and Ian. (Ian is 5, and can sing "MacCrimmon's Sweetheart.")

**A**MUSICIAN ALL HER LIFE, NANCY CRUTCHER TUNNICLIFFE FIRST BEGAN to study the Highland Bagpipe at Yale University while earning a B.A. in Anthropology. She then gained an M.A. in Ethnomusicology from Wesleyan University, specializing in the study of musical instruments. Post-graduate studies included three years at the Metropolitan Museum of Art as a cataloguer of musical instruments, with lectures at the university level as a side-line.



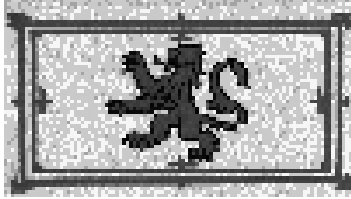
Nancy is a professional musician who firmly believes in taking piping beyond the confines of competition. She has appeared as guest bagpipe soloist many times with the Boston Pops at Symphony Hall, the American Symphony at Carnegie Hall, the National Symphony at the Kennedy Center, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl, among others. She has appeared on more than 100 television and radio shows while on national tours for the Scotch Whisky Association.

As a competitor, Nancy was the first winner of the Nicol-Brown Chalice in 1982, and she went on to have a successful career in the professional ranks. Her students have achieved top rankings in all categories of piping competition. A piobaireachd enthusiast, Nancy now focuses on teaching the Great Music in the Balmoral tradition, with thanks to her teacher James McIntosh, MBE. She is an EUSPBA-certified Adjudicator of all levels of bagpipe competition, and was a columnist for *the VOICE* for many years.

## Judges for the Nicol-Brown Amateur Invitational Contest

1982	Ed Neigh	1996	Scott MacAulay and Donald F. Lindsay
1983	James McGillivray	1997	Donald F. Lindsay
1984	Murray Henderson	1998	Jack Lee
1985	Donald F. Lindsay	1999	Michael Cusack
1986	William Livingstone	2000	Alasdair Gillies
1987	Amy Garson, Ed Krintz and Chip Reardon	2001	Michael Rogers
1988	Donald F. Lindsay	2002	Jack Taylor
1989	Seumas MacNeill	2003	Bruce Gandy and Michael Rogers
1990	James McGillivray	2004	Stuart Liddell and Donald F. Lindsay
1991	Colin MacLellan	2005	Donald MacPhee
1993	George Bell and Donald F. Lindsay	2006	John Wilson and Alasdair Gillies
1994	Colin MacLellan and Donald F. Lindsay	2007	John Wilson and Nancy Tunncliffe
1995	Bob Worrall	2008	Nancy Tunncliffe, Bobby Minnear and R. Iain MacDonald

Best wishes for a  
weekend of excellent music  
at the Nicol-Brown!



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# The Competitors

## **Johnny Bassett (Canterbury, New Hampshire)**

Johnny, 18, studies under John Cairns, and is a member of the Peel Regional Police Pipe Band. He started piping when he was 11, taking lessons from his elementary school teacher. Johnny was runner-up in the season standings for the Pipers' and Pipe Band Society of Ontario. He is a first-year student at Harvard University, where he is pursuing a degree in Human Evolutionary Biology.

## **Bobby Durning (Milltown, New Jersey)**

Bobby is a 16-year-old junior in high school. He started piping at the age of 8 with various instructors until he was 10, when he began taking lessons with his current teacher, P/M George M. Bell. This is Bobby's second year in Grade 1 and his first year at the Nicol-Brown Contest. He was the 2008 Gilchrist Challenge winner, which enabled him to go to Scotland in August to compete in the 2008 MacGregor Memorial Piobaireachd Competition at the Argyllshire Gathering. He was also the 2008 Sandy Jones Invitational champion, and Piper of the Day at the majority of the local games that he attended. Bobby currently plays with the City of Washington Pipe Band.

## **Richard Gillies (Portland, Oregon)**

Richard began his piping in South Africa in January 2000, at the age of 8. He received his instruction from Chris Macaulay, and later from P/M Jimmy Elston of the Krugersdorp Pipe Band, a band which Richard joined shortly after. After emigrating to the USA in 2003, he joined the Sir James McDonald Pipe Band in Portland, Oregon, receiving tuition from Patrick Case and Jeff Brewer. He is currently taking lessons from Jori Chisholm, Bruce Gandy and Chris Macaulay. Richard is a regular competitor in the BC Pipers' Association solo competition circuit. He began competing as a Grade 5 solo competitor in 2004, and has won the BCPA Grand Aggregate for Grades 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 in five consecutive years.

## **Thomas Harrington (Glenholme, Nova Scotia)**

Thomas is 16 years old, and started piping at the age of nine under the instruction of George Macintosh. He played with Old Scotia Pipes and Drums, of Great Village until 2007. He became a member of the 78th Highlanders Halifax Citadel Pipe Band in 2008 and is currently taking pipe lessons from Bruce Gandy. A highlight this past year was playing with the 78th Highlanders at Maxville, Ontario.

Thomas has won the Atlantic Canada Pipe Band Association Champion Supreme for Grades Three, Two and One. This past year he also won the Antigonish Highland Society/ACPBA Silver Medal Piobaireachd Challenge. Thomas would like to thank George Macintosh, Bruce Gandy, P/M Rod MacLean, the ACPBA, friends in Old Scotia Pipes and Drums and 78th Highlanders, and his family for all their support.

## **John Lee (Surrey, British Columbia)**

John has been piping for most of his 16 years, having started at the age of 5. He was born into a family of pipers, with his father and uncle being the founders and leaders of the Simon Fraser University Pipe Band. John has won many piping prizes along the way. In 2006, he tied for the BC Pipers' Association Grand Aggregate for Grade 2 pipers. In 2008, he was runner-up for the Grade 1 Grand Aggregate. John has been a member of the Robert Malcolm Memorial Juvenile Pipe Band for several years. He was a member of the band in 2005 when they won their 4th World Juvenile Championship.

## **Erik J. Leiken (Davis, California)**

Erik started piping at the age of eight. He received instruction from David Parkhurst, Bill Merriman, and P/M Ozzie Reid, whom he continues to work with. He has also studied Piobaireachd from Jimmy Young and Major Archie Cairns MMM CD.

Erik currently plays with the Kevin R. Blandford Pipe Band of Redlands, CA, teaches the Alameda County Sheriff's Pipe Band, and performs with the Dunvegan Pipe Band with his instructor. He has also played in the Prince Charles Pipe Band in the past. Currently Erik is an English major in Sacramento City College and spends his free time camping, hiking, and teaching piping.

## **Jon Maffett (Reynoldsburg, Ohio)**

Jon began piping at the age of 10 under the instruction of Mary McCoy of Canal Fulton, Ohio. His primary focus in piping had been band music and playing with the MacGregor Pipe Band through the 1980s. Due to college and starting a career and family, Jon stepped away from piping during the 90s. The lure of the bagpipes never really left him, and when the opportunity to play in a new band in the Central Ohio area presented itself, Jon jumped at that chance. Once again in the bagpipe scene, in 1999 Jon then became enamored with Piobaireachd and began long-distance lessons with Willie Connell of London Ontario. In 2002, Jon joined the North Coast Pipe Band and remained an active member until its end in 2005. Jon then was a member of the Toronto Police Pipe Band for the 2006 season, and joined the ranks of the Scottish Lion 78th Fraser Highlanders in the 2008 season. He started actively focusing on solo light music in 2005, taking instruction from Gail Brown by tape and then regular lessons with John Cairns in 2006. Jon has also participated in the Metro Cup, The Sandy Jones Invitational, and The George Sherriff Invitational. Currently living near Columbus, Ohio, Jon is the piping instructor for the Wooster College Pipe Band, owns and operates The Piper's Hut, and raises five children with his wife, Michelle.

## **Elizabeth Sheridan (Oakville, Ontario)**

Elizabeth began piping five years ago at the age of 12, under the instruction of Gail Brown. More recently, she began taking lessons in Piobaireachd from Glenn Brown as well. After three years of playing, Elizabeth joined the Peel Regional Police Pipe Band and has competed with the band for the past two competition seasons. Elizabeth began solo competitions in 2005 and has moved up a grade yearly. In 2007, she was the Ontario Championship Supreme winner in Grade 2 Light Music and in Intermediate Amateur Piobaireachd. Elizabeth continued her success this year by winning both Championship Supreme titles for Grade 1 Light Music and Senior Amateur Piobaireachd. Elizabeth is a first-year student at Wilfrid Laurier University and the University of Waterloo taking a double degree program in Business and Mathematics.

## **Andrew Tice (Lanoka Harbor, New Jersey)**

Andrew started piping when he was 12 in the Shamrock and Thistle Pipes and Drums out of Toms River, New Jersey. His first instructor was Katrina Hill, followed by his current instructor, George M. Bell. He has played with the Grade 5 Jersey Shore Celtic Pipe Band and was Pipe Sergeant of the Grade 2 Kenmure Pipe Band. After two years of solo competition in Grade 4 Junior, he went up a grade level each year, and in his first year in Grade 1, he has won Piper of the Day at a few events already. Andrew won the MSR at the first Balmoral Classic, and was Overall Amateur Champion at the 2008 USPiping Foundation Championships. He won the Grade 1 MSR at Glasgowlans, Rockland, Altamont and Ligonier. Andrew is currently in 2nd place overall in the EUSPBA season standings for Grade 1, and is playing with the Grade 1 City of Washington Pipe Band.

# 6/8 Marches

*(Competitors have chosen to play two tunes in this order.)*

## **Thomas Harrington**

Mrs. Lily Christie  
Jean Mauchline

## **Erik Leiken**

MacLeod of Mull  
Hugh Ferguson

## **Elizabeth Sheridan**

Pipe Sergeant John Barclay  
Pipe Major Donald MacLean of Lewis

## **Jon Maffett**

The Trees of North Uist  
The Dundee City Police Pipe Band

## **Andrew Tice**

Mrs. MacDougall  
Bruce Gandy's Farewell to the Iron Horse

## **Bobby Durning**

Cameron MacFadyen  
Luneburg Heath

## **Johnny Bassett**

Cameron MacFadyen  
Fairview Cottage

## **John Lee**

Ellenorr  
Meg MacRae

## **Richard Gillies**

Cameron MacFadyen  
The Heights of Cassino

### **IMPORTANT PHOTO OP**

Please meet in the sanctuary immediately following the final 6/8 March performance for the official 2008 group photo of the competitors and judges. Weather permitting, outdoor photos will also be taken at this time. Please wear your new Nicol-Brown lapel pin!

# Piobaireachd

*(The judges have selected one tune for each competitor.)*

## **Jon Maffett**

The Desperate Battle  
The King's Taxes  
The MacGregors' Salute

## **Andrew Tice**

Lament for the Viscount of Dundee  
MacDonald of Kinlochmoidart's Lament #1  
Lachlan MacNeil Campbell of Kintarbert's Fancy

## **Bobby Durning**

The Desperate Battle  
The Groat  
Lament for the Viscount of Dundee

## **Johnny Bassett**

The MacGregors' Salute  
Corrienessan's Salute  
The Massacre of Glencoe

## **John Lee**

Black Donald's March  
The Desperate Battle  
Tulloch Ard

## **Richard Gillies**

The MacLeods' Salute  
The Groat  
Tulloch Ard

## **Thomas Harrington**

I am Proud to Play a Pipe  
Hector MacLean's Warning  
The Massacre of Glencoe

## **Erik Leiken**

Lament for Mary MacLeod  
MacCrimmon's Sweetheart  
Hector MacLean's Warning

## **Elizabeth Sheridan**

Lament for the Viscount of Dundee  
Lament for the Departure of King James  
MacNeill of Barra's March

# March, Strathspey and Reel

*(The judges have selected one set of tunes for each competitor.)*

## Johnny Bassett

2/4 Marches: The Braes of Castle Grant  
Captain Carswell  
Strathspeys: Lady MacKenzie of Gairloch  
The Islay Ball  
Reels: The Rejected Suitor  
Thomson's Dirk

## John Lee

2/4 Marches: The Pap of Glencoe  
The Braes of Brecklet  
Strathspeys: Lady MacKenzie of Gairloch  
Dora MacLeod  
Reels: The Smith of Chilliechassie  
Thomson's Dirk

## Richard Gillies

2/4 Marches: The Young MacGregor  
Hugh Kennedy  
Strathspeys: Arniston Castle  
The Piper's Bonnet  
Reels: Alick C. McGregor  
The Brown Haired Maid

## Thomas Harrington

2/4 Marches: Kantara to El Arish  
The Conundrum  
Strathspeys: Maggie Cameron  
Kirstie MacCallman's Favorite  
Reels: The Blackberry Bush  
The Rejected Suitor

## Erik Leiken

2/4 Marches: Millbank Cottage  
Major Manson's Farewell to Clachantrushal  
Strathspeys: Lady Loudon  
Captain Colin Campbell  
Reels: The Brown Haired Maid  
The Sheepwife

## Elizabeth Sheridan

2/4 Marches: John MacFadyen of Melfort  
The Braes of Castle Grant  
Strathspeys: The Shepherd's Crook  
John Roy Stewart  
Reels: The Rejected Suitor  
Sandy Cameron

## Jon Maffett

2/4 Marches: The Braes of Castle Grant  
MacLean of Pennycross  
Strathspeys: The Islay Ball  
John Roy Stewart  
Reels: The Cockerel in the Creel  
Thomson's Dirk

## Andrew Tice

2/4 Marches: Hugh Kennedy  
MacLean of Pennycross  
Strathspeys: John Roy Stewart  
The Piper's Bonnet  
Reels: The Sheepwife  
The Smith of Chilliechassie

## Bobby Durning

2/4 Marches: The Knightswood Ceilidh  
Edinburgh City Police Pipe Band  
Strathspeys: Cabar Feidh  
The Piper's Bonnet  
Reels: The Cockerel in the Creel  
Major David Manson

### CELEBRATION DINNER

We have a limited number of extra spaces available for dinner on Saturday night after the contest with the judges, competitors, family, Nicol-Brown alumni, and committee members in a private room at Lynn's Uptown Tavern, 15 Colvin Avenue, Albany, New York. (tel: 518-453-1566)

If you'd like to join us for dinner, please see Heather Scott to arrange for payment.



The Executive Committee of the  
Eastern United States Pipe Band Association  
extends a very warm welcome to Iain MacDonald,  
and best wishes to the  
Nicol-Brown Amateur Invitational Piping Competition  
competitors, judges, volunteers, organizers and spectators.

This is truly one of the premier amateur piping events in the world  
and it is an honor to be a sponsor.

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For more information, please contact:  
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or Executive Secretary Carole Hackett at [zecsec@euspba.org](mailto:zecsec@euspba.org)



## Be a Patron of the Arts!

The Nicol-Brown Amateur Invitational Contest has provided an elite, formal indoor event for Amateur pipers since 1982, thanks to the generous donors and volunteers who have given their time and financial support over the years.

If you'd like to volunteer to help with next year's contest, please speak with one of the committee members. If you'd like to send a donation of any size, please mail a check payable to the Nicol-Brown Chalice to:

Barb McCarthy  
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**NEW!** Send your donation through Paypal at [www.nicol-brown.org](http://www.nicol-brown.org)

The Nicol-Brown Chalice, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.



The group photo of the competitors for the 1982 Nicol-Brown Chalice included two of the judges for the 2008 contest.

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Martin Beaton  
Maureen Connor  
Betsy Douglas  
Paula Glendinning  
Donna Hanks  
Donald F. Lindsay  
Barbara McCarthy  
Erin McCarthy  
Heather Scott  
JoAnn Scott  
Mary White

### VOLUNTEERS

Willa Davie  
Andrew Douglas  
Eric MacNeill  
Bobby Minnear  
Michael Schoppe  
Kegan Sheehan  
Stephen Walker

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Frank Strauss  
Nancy Tunnicliffe  
Rick Woolard

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### MEMORIAL GIFTS

Peter Kent's donation is given in memory of Ruffin Hobbs.  
Doreen Forney's donation is given in memory of P/M Angus Macdonald.

## History

In recognition of the continuing development of piping standards in North America, Donald F. Lindsay and students from Williams College in Massachusetts established the First Annual Williams College Amateur Invitational Piobaireachd, where the Nicol-Brown Chalice was first presented on April 2, 1982. This special event was dedicated to Robert Brown and Robert Nicol ("The Bobs of Balmoral") who shared a deep and abiding enthusiasm for Piobaireachd. It was out of their affiliation with John MacDonald of Inverness that their life-long commitment to the teaching and perpetuation of Ceol Mor grew. As musicians and as world citizens, their lives remain an inspiration to pipers everywhere. It is upon the shoulders of these great teachers and Piobaireachd authorities that today's pipers and instructors stand.

Modeled after Scotland's Oban and Inverness competitions, the "Olympics of Piping," the Nicol-Brown Invitational provides enthusiastic top amateur pipers with a prestigious competition which sets a standard by which to judge their piping, and a goal to direct their hours of practice. Piobaireachd, or classical pipe music, does not always get a fair hearing due to the length, difficulty and intricacy of the tunes, but this invitational contest has become a respected place to play and listen to Piobaireachd in the United States. In order to encourage Piobaireachd to the highest standards, the top amateur Piobaireachd players from across the North American continent have been invited to compete. All competitors selected for the Nicol-Brown must be ranked at the top amateur level for both Piobaireachd and Light Music by their home associations, and must have significant results in the current season.

The Nicol-Brown has pioneered the way for elite invitational events for amateur pipers. Many former competitors and their family members return each year to volunteer their time to continue the traditions of the Nicol-Brown — a testimony to the influence that the contest has had on the lives of so many pipers.



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# Trophies and Prizes

In 1982, Brian Yates, an American piper and silversmith, was commissioned to craft the Nicol-Brown Chalice, with the winning Piobaireachd competitor's name to be inscribed on the base each year. Brian has described the Chalice project as a "cathedral" which would take years to complete. Stephen Walker of Walker Metalsmiths has volunteered many hours of his artistic skills to bring the cathedral closer to completion.

In 1987, the Nicol-Brown committee added a March, Strathspey and Reel contest, and commissioned Mr. Fred Graham, Scottish Celtic Armourer and Silversmith of the "Royal Mile" in Edinburgh, to make a target in honor of P/M William Ross. The MSR winner's name is inscribed on the target each year, along with the tunes played in the winning performance.

In 1990, a 6/8 March contest was added in honor of Donald MacLeod, with a silver buckle designed by Brian Yates to be awarded each year. Stephen Walker has designed a new edition of the buckle to be awarded for the second time this year. He has done considerable research on a technique to create "chip-carving" which is how he believes many of the early medieval masterpieces of Celtic metalwork were fashioned. The method seems to have been lost about a thousand years ago, and Stephen is working on a revival.

## Nicol-Brown Chalice for Piobaireachd

1982	Nancy Crutcher: "Lament for Donald Duaghal MacKay"
1983	Ian Beatty: "Black Donald's March"
1984	Robert Minnear: "Lament for Donald Duaghal MacKay"
1985	Kenneth Garson: "The Vaunting"
1986	June Potter: "The Park Piobaireachd" #2
1987	Joyce McIntosh: "The Old Men of the Shells"
1988	Daniel Whatley: "The Park Piobaireachd" #2
1989	Katy Rashid: "The MacDougalls' Gathering"
1990	Daniel Kenny: "The Desperate Battle"
1991	Skip Cleavinger: "The Earl of Seaforth's Salute"
1992	The contest was not held.
1993	Paula Glendinning: "The Desperate Battle"
1994	Andrew Hoag: "Beloved Scotland"
1995	Paula Glendinning: "The Desperate Battle"
1996	Ryan MacDonald: "Grain in Hides, Corn in Sacks"
1997	John MacPhee: "The Battle of the Pass of Crieff"
1998	Brian May: "The Prince's Salute"
1999	Maureen Connor: "The Marquis of Argyll's Salute"
2000	Erin McCarthy: "The Rout of Glenfruin"
2001	Erin McCarthy: "The Rout of Glenfruin"
2002	Jeremy Freeman: "The Old Men of the Shells"
2003	Lyric Todkill: "Lament for the Only Son"
2004	Eric Ouellette: "Scarce of Fishing"
2005	Colin Lee: "The Desperate Battle"
2006	Cameron Scott: "The Old Men of the Shells"
2007	Alastair Lee: "Melbank's Salute"

The overall Nicol-Brown champion for 2008 will win a Peter Henderson pipe chanter, a custom-made kilt, and round-trip airfare from a major North American airport to London to compete in the Scottish Piping Society of London competitions in November 2009. This will allow our winner a year to prepare to compete in the prestigious Piobaireachd, MSR, and Hornpipe & Jig contests in London. This also provides the outstanding opportunity to listen to the Bratach Gorm and other events which draw the top players from around the world. Bob Brown and Bob Nicol were both featured prominently in the prize lists in London, and we are proud to connect our contest to that history. Bob Brown won the Open Piobaireachd (now called the Gillies Cup) 12 times and the Bratach Gorm (for Former Winners of the Gold Medal or Gillies Cup) three times. His last win in London was in November of 1971, just a few months before he died.

**Inspired by the Ardagh Chalice, c. 800-899 AD, the Nicol-Brown Chalice was designed and created by Brian Yates as a symbol of the pursuit of excellence in Celtic art and music. Stephen Walker of Walker Metalsmiths has added his artistry to the chalice, and has plans for further embellishments.**



## William Ross Challenge Target for March, Strathspey & Reel

1987	Alasdair Wright	1998	Andrew Douglas
1988	Daniel Whatley	1999	Glenn Brown
1989	Ken McKeveny	2000	Glenn Brown
1990	Robert Boyd	2001	Lionel Tupman
1991	Alan Bevan	2002	Lionel Tupman
1993	Paula Glendinning	2003	Lyric Todkill
1994	Jason Briscoe	2004	Andrew Lewis
1995	Michael Rogers	2005	Alex Gandy
1996	Michael Rogers	2006	Micah Babinski
1997	Steven Tripp	2007	Alastair Lee



## Donald MacLeod Memorial Silver Buckle for 6/8 Marches

1990	P. Andrew L. Hayes	2000	Andrew J. Hayes
1991	Alan Bevan	2001	Lionel Tupman
1993	Jamie Troy	2002	Lionel Tupman
1994	Ryan MacDonald	2003	Lyric Todkill
1995	Paula Glendinning	2004	Robert Beaton
1996	Ryan MacDonald	2005	Colin Lee
1997	Joss Fisher	2006	Kegan Sheehan
1998	Andrew Douglas	2007	Gordon Conn
1999	Glenn Brown		



Left to right: Bob Brown, John MacDonald, and Bob Nicol.

## ROBERT URQUHART BROWN

Bob Brown was born in 1906 in Banchory, Scotland, of a family which had long shown a keen interest in all the music of Scotland. He received his first instruction on the bagpipes from William Fraser, a pupil of G.S. McLennan, who although suffering from a physical handicap acquired during the First World War, was still considered a fine player. Next, the young Brown went to Jonathan Ewen, an Inverness Medalist, who began for him his life-long study of Ceol Mor. Ewen was a pupil of Sandy Cameron, so it was not surprising that his young pupil began to win a number of competitions in his local area.



This brought him to the attention of G.S. Allan, who took him under his wing and accompanied him to the Argyllshire Gathering in 1925, where Brown won the junior piobaireachd. The following year he was unplaced but highly commended in the Gold Medal event.

Although he was a keen competitor and loved the excitement of the boards, Bob Brown did not always find it easy to get time off from his work—which is surprising in view of the fact that his employers have always been enthusiasts for piping. It was in fact 1931 before he was able to return to Oban, and this time he won the Gold Medal. By then, however, he was the holder of the Inverness Medal, which he won in 1928. This was also the year when, according to Bob, there occurred the most important event in his piping life—he began to take lessons from John MacDonald. “I owe my knowledge,” said Bob Brown once, “to John MacDonald who made me the piobaireachd enthusiast that I am.” Certainly, it is partly through his long and close association with John MacDonald that he came to be looked on as a great authority, but this was also due to his own clear and reasoned expositions on this subject, and his unfailing ability to produce great music whenever he played.

His fame and standing increased as time went on. In the last decade of his life, pipers began beating a path to the door of his cottage at Balmoral and he began taking his knowledge to different parts of the world. For several years he was the instructor at the Invermark summer schools in New York state; he visited South Africa and New Zealand; and it was while he was in Australia in 1972 that the first signs came of the ailment which was to prove so quickly fatal. He was barely able to get home to his beloved Scotland before he passed away.

## ROBERT BELL NICOL

Bob Nicol was born in 1905 in Durris, Aberdeenshire, and was first taught by a piper MacKellar, a pupil of MacDougall Gillies, who was later killed in the 1914-18 war. He was then taught by one of the Ewen brothers. Another of the brothers, Jonathan Ewen, at that time was teaching the young Bob Brown who was later to become Bob Nicol’s life-long friend. Bob Nicol had a successful junior career and his first piping appointment was as piper to Lord Cowdray at Dunecht. It was from here that he moved to Balmoral as King George V’s piper in 1924. In 1926, when only 20 years old he had a shooting accident that resulted in the loss of his right eye. A shot from a fellow gamekeeper ricocheted off a frozen tree and hit him in the eye.



Later in 1926, King George V was anxious to have Bob given the best tuition and he consulted the factor at Balmoral, Sir Douglas Ramsay, and Sheriff Grant, Rothiemurchus, who were both pupils of John MacDonald. As a result, Bob Nicol was sent to Inverness to study with John MacDonald for a month that same year. It was a nerve-wracking time, as Bob related, “When John MacDonald came into the room he gave me a good dressing-down for a start. He said, ‘You’re no use to me.’ In fact he was quite nasty to me for the whole month.” But on the completion of his course a very good report was sent to Balmoral. The following year he was accompanied by Bob Brown, and the visits continued every year until 1939.

During this period, Bob Nicol became one of the outstanding players, winning all the top honours including the Gold Medal at Inverness and Oban in 1930 and the Clasp in 1932. His medal tune at Inverness was “Lament for Donald Ban MacCrimmon,” a tune he was later to play at the graveside of both John MacDonald and Bob Brown. Throughout the 1939-45 war he served as pipe major in the 2nd Gordons and ran a piobaireachd class for the 15th Scottish Division. He also taught at schools in America and Brittany. He was a very good and firm teacher, a likeable man with a sharp wit and sense of humour. Dedicated to keeping the traditional piobaireachd alive, he was undoubtedly one of the greats and one of the most knowledgeable men of our time. Bob Nicol died in 1978.

(These bios include excerpts from Vol. 24, #10 and Vol. 30, #9 of the *Piping Times*.)

## PIPE MAJOR WILLIAM ROSS

Pipe Major William Ross (1879-1965) learned his early piping from his father, mother, and his uncle, Aeneas Ross, who guided his early steps in Piobaireachd. By his own great musical ability, Pipe Major Ross rose to the top of his profession. Music flowed from William Ross’s pipe and fingers with no apparent effort: “the mighty frame seemed hardly to need to blow”. It was the simplicity of the true expert—like the golf swing of a master—making it look easy until we try to do it ourselves. Unlike so many pipers, success never spoiled him, and if ever one needed a tonic, an hour in the company of the illustrious Pipe Major would assure a cure for the ailment. He was peerless in conversation, a Prince of Storytellers. He loved human beings and was loved by them in return. In his life and work, Willie

Ross was a delightful example of the perfect gentleman. By his courtesy, his modesty, and his professional ability, he left an indelible, honoured name that will live down through the ages and cheer the hearts of those who listen to the recordings of his lovely music.

He joined the Scots Guards in 1896 and from that date until his retirement in 1957 he served piping and pipers. In 1920 he was appointed Principal of the new Army School of Piping at Edinburgh Castle. After his retirement from the Army, it was in 1921 that he became the Piobaireachd Society's tutor, and through his appointment, pipers both military and civilian were able to benefit from his tuition. His pupils are scattered throughout the world and always provided the cream of the piping world with many champions amongst them. The world of pipers has not only been made up of players, teachers, and composers; there have been those who worked to make the music of the pipe available to the piper, and those who worked to ensure that the great heritage was passed on. William Ross's collection of pipe music remains the mainstay and guide of many pipers.

(Excerpted from *Piping Times*, June 1966; *A Highlander Looks Back* by Angus MacPherson; *Scots Guards Book 1*; and *Piper's Handbook* by J. A. MacLellan.)

## DONALD MACLEOD

Donald MacLeod was born in Stornoway on the Isle of Lewis on August 14, 1916. His first piping lessons were from his father, and at the age of six he came into contact with Pipe Major Willie Ross, who travelled to the Hebrides on behalf of the Piobaireachd Society. At age 11, Donald had his first lessons with John MacDonald of Inverness, and that relationship lasted for 25 years.



MacLeod joined the Seaforth Highlanders in 1937, and in 1939 went to France with the 2nd Battalion. He was taken prisoner at St. Valery, but escaped, and made his way back across Europe to re-join his regiment. MacLeod was made pipe major in 1941, and in 1944 returned to the front, where he piped his regiment across the Rhine during the last campaign of the war. Following the war, MacLeod spent a number of years at Fort George, where he tutored young pipers in the British Army.

Few competitors have won as many prizes as Donald MacLeod. He won the Gold Medal at Inverness in 1947, and added eight Clasps between 1948 and 64. He won the Open Piobaireachd at Oban three times, and six Silver Stars for the Former Winners' MSR at Inverness. In 1959, Donald MacLeod competed only at Oban and Inverness. Of the seven events he entered, MacLeod won six first prizes, and was unplaced in the 7th event!

Donald MacLeod owned the bagpipe firm of Grainger & Campbell after leaving the army, and during those years he travelled around the world to teach and perform. He also was among the first to use recorded lessons for teaching piobaireachd, and he sent tapes to pipers around the world. Those original tapes are now being released in a comprehensive CD series available to all pipers.

MacLeod was a prolific composer with six books of light music, plus a collection of piobaireachd. Many of the tunes collected, composed and arranged for his 7th and 8th books of light music were published by the Gordon Highlanders after his death in 1982. His tunes are standard fare of both bands and soloists, and they are heard wherever the Highland bagpipe is played.

Donald MacLeod left many recordings of himself through years of BBC radio programs and solo records. After he had retired from competition he was heard on two excellent recordings, "The Piper in the Nave" and "The Piper's Ceilidh."

MacLeod was awarded the M.B.E. for his services to piping.

—by Iain MacDonald, Regina, Saskatchewan



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## Results of the 23th Nicol-Brown Amateur Invitational Contest

OCTOBER 6, 2007 ■ ALBANY, NEW YORK

Judges: John Wilson and Nancy Tunncliffe

### 2007 OVERALL NICOL-BROWN CHAMPIONSHIP

1. Alastair Lee (22) Airfare to London donated by the NH Highland Games and a custom-made kilt donated by Sandy St. James
2. Gordon Conn (16) \$350 piping scholarship donated by The British Shop
3. Derek Midgley (13) \$250 piping scholarship donated by the Capital District Celtic Cultural Association
4. Ben McClamrock (10) \$200 piping scholarship donated by Fairlie M. Sharp, daughter of Bob Brown
5. Andrew MacPhail (10) \$200 piping scholarship donated by Doreen Forney in memory of P/M Angus Macdonald

(Points for overall champion)

### ROBERT NICOL-ROBERT BROWN CHALICE FOR PIOBAIREACHD

- (9) 1. Alastair Lee ("Melbank's Salute") Bound Piobaireachd Society Collection donated by Tone Czar Bagpipes
- (7) 2. Derek Midgley ("The Groat") Blackwood practice chanter w/ antler sole donated by Mark Cushing
- (6) 3. Ben McClamrock ("Tulach Ard") Donald MacPherson book & CD donated by Celtic Outfitters
- (5) 4. Sean Moran ("Lord Lovat's Lament") Andrew Wright CD and *Ceol na Pioba* CD donated by Rampant Lion Celtic Traders
- (4) 5. Andrew MacPhail ("The Bicker")
- (3) 6. Gordon Conn ("The Parading of the MacDonalds")

### WILLIAM ROSS CHALLENGE TARGE FOR MARCH, STRATHSPEY AND REEL

- (8) 1. Alastair Lee ("The Young MacGregor," "The Shepherd's Crook," "The Sheepwife") Leather sporran from St. Kilda Retail
- (6) 2. Gordon Conn William Ross Books 1-3
- (5) 3. Andrew MacPhail 2007 World Pipe Band Championship DVD
- (4) 4. Ben McClamrock John Cairns CD and Bodega CD donated by Rampant Lion Celtic Traders
- (3) 5. Derek Midgley
- (2) 6. Dan Lyden

### DONALD MACLEOD MEMORIAL 6/8 MARCHES

- (7) 1. Gordon Conn ("Jean Mauchline," "The Heights of Cassino") Donald MacLeod Memorial Silver Buckle created by Stephen Walker
- (5) 2. Alastair Lee Donald MacLeod Books 1-2
- (4) 3. Dan Lyden Gordon Duncan CD and Old Blind Dogs CD donated by Rampant Lion Celtic Traders
- (3) 4. Derek Midgley "Highland Games" CD and MacTalla Mor CD donated by Rampant Lion Celtic Traders
- (2) 5. Daniel Cole
- (1) 6. Andrew MacPhail

### DRESS AND DEPARTMENT (judged by Eric MacNeill)

1. Derek Midgley 2005 Dan Reid Contest CD donated by Celtic Outfitters and a kilt alteration donated by Peigi Mulligan

The Nicol-Brown committee would like to thank the organizers of the New Hampshire Highland Games for their continued support of Amateur piping through a significant annual contribution to our prize list. The trip to compete in London is an outstanding opportunity for the Nicol-Brown champion each year.

An invitation to the Nicol-Brown is held each year for the Amateur Grade One Piper of the Day at the New Hampshire Highland Games.

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# Results of the 26th Nicol-Brown Amateur Invitational Contest

OCTOBER 11, 2008 ■ ALBANY, NEW YORK

Judges: Nancy Tunncliffe, Bobby Minnear, and Iain MacDonald

## EVENTS AND WINNERS

## PRIZES

### 2008 OVERALL NICOL-BROWN CHAMPIONSHIP

1. Johnny Bassett Airfare to London to compete in November 2009, donated by the New Hampshire Highland Games, a custom-made kilt donated by Sandy St. James, and a Peter Henderson blackwood pipe chanter donated by R.G. Hardie, Inc.
2. Bobby Durning Peter Henderson blackwood pipe chanter donated by R.G. Hardie, Inc.
3. John Lee \$250 piping scholarship donated by Tartantown
4. Jon Maffett \$200 piping scholarship donated by Peter Kent in memory of Ruffin Hobbs
5. Richard Gillies \$200 piping scholarship donated by Doreen Forney in memory of P/M Angus Macdonald

(Points for overall champion)

### ROBERT NICOL-ROBERT BROWN CHALICE FOR PIOBAIREACHD

- (9) 1. Johnny Bassett Bound Piobaireachd Society Collection donated by Tone Czar Bagpipes
- (7) 2. Bobby Durning *Binneas is Boreraig* and Allan MacDonald's "Dastirum" CD, both donated by Celtic Outfitters
- (6) 3. Elizabeth Sheridan *Binneas is Boreraig* donated by Doreen Forney in memory of P/M Angus Macdonald
- (5) 4. Richard Gillies "Masters of Piobaireachd" CDs, Volume 1-4
- (4) 5. Thomas Harrington "Masters of Piobaireachd" CDs, Vol. 1-2, and Patrick Molard's CD: "The waking of the bridegroom"

### WILLIAM ROSS CHALLENGE TARGE FOR MARCH, STRATHSPEY AND REEL

- (8) 1. John Lee Leather sporran from St. Kilda Retail
- (6) 2. Bobby Durning Bound William Ross Collection donated by Tartantown
- (5) 3. Jon Maffett *The Gordon Highlanders Pipe Music Collection*, Volume 1 & 2
- (4) 4. Johnny Bassett 4 CDs donated by Rampant Lion Celtic Traders
- (3) 5. Richard Gillies 4 CDs donated by Rampant Lion Celtic Traders

### DONALD MACLEOD MEMORIAL 6/8 MARCHES

- (6) 1. Johnny Bassett The Donald MacLeod Memorial Silver Buckle created by Stephen Walker
- (4) 2. Jon Maffett Signed copy of *Bagpipes: A National Collection of a National Instrument* donated by Dr. Hugh Cheape
- (3) 3. Bobby Durning Signed copy of *Along the Road* donated by Iain MacDonald and 2 CDs donated by Rampant Lion Celtic Traders
- (2) 4. John Lee Signed copy of *Along the Road* donated by Iain MacDonald and 2 CDs donated by Rampant Lion Celtic Traders
- (1) 5. Andrew Tice Signed copy of *Along the Road* donated by Iain MacDonald

### DRESS AND DEPARTMENT (judged by Eric MacNeill)

1. Johnny Bassett Kilt alteration donated by Peigi Mulligan

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