

Band Blurp

January 2017



PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS.

Greetings one and all.

That sounds like a Christmas greeting, doesn't it? Well if you thought 2016 went fast, just think that it will soon be Christmas 2017.



Here we are still in holiday mode and there is a very pushy newsletter editor sending out emails...'I haven't got your article for the newsletter please hurry up!!!' Grrrr, you go off some people.

2016 was a very busy year for the band and from the signals I am receiving on the bush telegraph, 2017 is going to be, too. We hit the ground running with a workshop next week and then it is Art Deco and then and then and so it goes on.

We have a very dedicated group of playing members, young and not so young, and that group continues to grow, which is very encouraging and healthy for the long-term growth of the band.

There is also a hard working Committee beavering away behind the scenes and I am grateful for their commitment to the cause of the organisation.

There are too, the loyal parents and supporters who come along and give their help and encouragement at concerts, on the side-lines and street corners. I thank you for your past support and look forward to the same for the coming year.

Here's to a great 2017

Regards

Richard Manning

Our Vision:

To be a musically competent pipe band, responsive to members' aspirations and respected in the community.

PIPE MAJOR'S NEWS

Readers of past January band newsletters will know that I use the Christmas break to do some reading and its been the same this time. One of the books I digested (along with a collection of Isaac Asimov robot stories and Ronnie Barker's



'*A Few Well Frozen Worms*') was '*How We Learn*' which I thought might be relevant to what we do as we have such a mental load to cope with our music.

Surprisingly the author, Benedict Carey, has found research that shows that setting aside a regular time and place, with no distractions, for our study is not the ideal way to learn. We are better interleaving our subjects (mix our music practice with other activity), changing where we learn (learn, practice in different places) and pre-testing (hearing a tune before we try to learn it) can improve our learning. The brain is sensitive to mood, to timing, to circadian rhythms, as well as to location and environment so we need to exploit these quirks to our advantage.

Targets for the year? For the youngsters and learners, we'll be working early in the year on the tunes needed for good performances at the Highland Games at Easter. I'm keen for everyone to achieve some of the certification from the RNZPBA College of Piping & Drumming (for anyone interested, their syllabuses are available on the RNZPBA Education website).

For the Band, we'll sort out what music we want to concentrate on – what older tunes do we revise and what new ones do we learn? I'd like to see us do at least one concert this year (in addition to any Supporters' Nights events) and of course, after being involved in more than 60 events last year, 2017 is certain to see us out and about making our usual contribution to our community.

My personal target is to get more people playing pipes this year, so if you know of anyone interested, please put them in touch with me.

May your year be filled with crotchets and quavers, quick marches and slow airs, drum rolls and doublings, but most of all I hope you continue to enjoy your pipe band experience.

Kerry Marshall
Pipe Major

Don't worry about old age - it doesn't last.
Jokes about German sausage are the wurst.

What do you call a dinosaur with an extensive vocabulary? A thesaurus.

Ken's Komments



After a busy 2016 with the band participating in 66 events including Inglesides, concerts and community parades, we had one last event to cap off the year – New Years Eve!

Yes, as in previous years we met at 6pm to tune up ready to go to Kennedy Park Motor Camp. We then proceeded to Kensington Masonic Village and onto the Taradale Club. After stopping off at the Maddens for refreshments and a tune up, we were off to the Mission and then the Taradale RSA, where we then had a beautiful supper. Next it was the Napier RSA, where we finished up outside the Masonic Hotel ready for the new year countdown and Auld Lang Syne.



After the firework display we continued to entertain the huge crowd that had gathered around us and finally, at 1am, we were able to leave and head for home.

One hour later, at 2am, Kerry & Penny celebrated the new year in Aussie.

A big thank you to all the pipers and drummers, our supporters and bucket collectors, our bus driver Mike

and all those who hosted us to make our final parade for 2106 a great success.

Now that we've put the Christmas decorations away, eaten all the cakes and puddings, we're ready for whatever 2017 brings.

Regards

Ken

Our greatest glory is not in never falling but in rising every time we fall —
Confucius.

If you set your goals ridiculously high and it's a failure, you will fail above everyone else's success. - *James Cameron.*

Bill Wright Remembers.

I was born in Havelock North and my first day at school was the day of the 1931 earthquake. My father was then manager of Borthwick's Freezing Works at Paki Paki which was totally wrecked and with the estimate cost of 200,000 pounds, Borthwick decided not to rebuild and transferred my father over to their Waitara works. Neither in Havelock nor Waitara did I see or hear a piper, let alone a full Pipe Band, until our family attended the afternoon performance in New Plymouth by one of the top Military Bands of the World. It was the local New Plymouth Pipe Band in McQueen tartan, glengarry bonnets, with white spats and twirling bass drum and tenor drum sticks that enraptured me. My father asked if I would like to join the Band as a learner – the following Friday night I was having my first lesson. The New Plymouth junior band was well set up. The Caledonian Society imported 12 half-size Lowry bag pipes and by 1939 we were on public parades tagging along behind the senior band.

In 1939 World War 2 broke out and many of the bandsmen were on Military service, so the best of the junior band boys were needed for the Senior Band. In 1944 I had finished school and went to Auckland Teachers college and part-time University. I joined the Auckland and District Pipe Band and we had some memorable parades. One parade was in the Auckland Town Hall, a patriotic concert with Gracie Fields, a top British singer and entertainer. The Band played an opening item and also first item after Interval. We sat on chairs at the back of the stage, so I can truthfully say "I have been on stage with a great singer." The last few lines of her song, Grandfathers Bagpipes, were:

*We use them as a teapot and a vacuum cleaner too,
When the chimney's smoking we use them to clean the flue,
At the end of time as I've been told, when Gabriel's tired of blowing his horn,
What will we hear on Judgement morn? – Grandfather's Bagpipes.*

While at Teachers College we all had to learn dances from various countries for phys-ed. We were told the next week we would all learn the Scottish Eightsome Reel. I said I knew the dance well and would like to play for it and so I played the pipes for the reel 32 times in two days! In the same week the Germans signed unconditional surrender and college closed for the day. We all went to Queen St and I played the pipes in Queen St while several sets did the Eightsome Reel several times and other dancers were doing the 'Hokey Tokey.

In 1946 I had finished my Teachers' qualification and was assigned to teach at Waitara for one year. I re-joined the New Plymouth Pipe Band and the uniform that fitted already had Corporal Stripes. War time petrol rationing had continued but I got a special allocation because as Pipe Corporal my attendances at practices and parades was so necessary! My first permanent job was at a Masterton School. I thought I would join the Masterton Pipe Band but I 'chickened out' when I found they practised in a brick building badly damaged in the 1942 Masterton earthquake. Big cracks were held together by wooden planks bolted on. Memories of the 1931 quake were too vivid. Instead I joined the St Andrews society and enjoyed both doing the Old Time and Scottish Dances and also playing for them.

In 1948 I was promoted to a District High School position at Pahiatua. There was no Pipe Band at all but several good ex Bandsmen. I enthused them into forming a local band and was their original Pipe Major. The local townsfolk were very supportive and the band survived for 50 years. I did not enjoy teaching there, so I joined a local Bank instead. I enjoyed the work but the threat of compulsory transfer at short notice was a worry. They sent me to Hastings branch where I joined the newly formed HB Scottish and once again I enjoyed the good quality of inspiring leadership but again the probability of a compulsory transfer hung over me and twice I was sent to 'fill in' at Waipawa and finally a permanent transfer to Waipukurau in 1953. It was not



Corporal Bill Wright 70 years ago, in the New Plymouth Caledonian Society and Pipe Band uniform - The McQueen Tartan.

feasible to play with the band in Hastings as the roads were so poor. In 1954 I was sent to the Wellington branch of the bank and later that year I contacted rheumatic fever, so I spent six weeks bed rest in the Wellington hospital and was sent home with the advice never to play pipes again. Home was back in Havelock North where my parents had retired back to.

In 1957, engaged to marry Eileen and fed up with all these transfers I decided to go back teaching. My first job was at Tauranga Boy's College. While there, I gathered in several of the boys who played the pipes and we formed a little piping group. The Pipe Major of the Tauranga band invited our little group to join his Hauraki Regimental Band. My little group being High School Cadets were no trouble and I was the civilian associate. We spent a week at Papakura Military Camp and it rained all week, so I joined the Army to get some dry clothes! When we returned to Tauranga I had a letter waiting appointing me to a Napier primary school.

Back at last in the Bay, I had to brush up my Teaching with the changed methods and with building a new house etc, I just didn't have time to re-join the band.

Two things I did for the band later - I researched the old records of the old tradition that the Caledonian Society and Pipe Band Inc. had free use of Mclean Park for two days a year. With the help of the Mayor, Jock Stevenson and some of his friends, the Society had this right restored for one day free use every year provided we did use our privilege every year. While I was Chief of the Society we did use this privilege and

one national band contest was held, but unfortunately this privilege was allowed to lapse.

When the band wanted to break from the Napier Caledonian Society and Pipe Band Inc. feelings ran rather high and I was asked to chair the big combined meeting. It seemed likely there could be 'blood on the moon' but somehow we managed a peaceful solution. As I pointed out the Band had been subordinate to the Society but financially handled ten times as much money as the Society – it was the 'tail wagging the dog'.

I always enjoyed my piping. I have played in all sorts of places. When both Clan Macleod Chiefs were visiting NZ, I played for Chief Dame Flora McLeod and later, her descendant, Chief John Mcleod and various other top brass of the Clan that visited. Each year I taught my School pupils to do the Eightsome Reel and I played for them for St Andrews day and break ups etc. and when our own children were learning Highland Dancing, I played for the dancing competitions. I even went to a nieces 6th birthday on my way to the beach one day and one of the little guest when asked after by her mother if she had enjoyed the party said 'yes we had jelly and ice cream

Coming Events

Monday practices are at the Band Rooms, Nelson Park, unless otherwise indicated.

January 2017

Mon 23-Thu 26 Getting Going workshop
Mon 30 First Practice

February

Sat 11 Napier Caledonian Society Ingleside
Thu 16-Sun 19 Art Deco Weekend
Sat 18 St. Pauls Church Fete
Sat 18 Art Deco Fete and Vintage Car Parade
Sun 19 Vintage Car Club Breakfast

March

Mon 6 Supporters' Night, Taradale RSA
Sat 11 Napier Caledonian Society Ingleside



Gray Helliwell

Gray made a significant contribution to people and to pipe bands in Napier since his arrival in the city in 1969 and not just to the band but, more importantly, to the people who had the privilege of knowing him. As a member of the City of Napier Pipe Band, then as a founding member of the Drones & Sticks PB, and more recently as a member of the Napier Pipe Band since we have all come together, Gray was not just a piper, he was actively involved in many aspects of our pipe band life.

He began his piping career as a founding member of the Dannevirke & Districts PB in 1949, going on to play with Dannevirke & Districts from 1950 to 1953.

He played in the Army Band while undertaking compulsory Military Training in 1955 and, in the years from 1966 to 1969, played with the Waipawa & Districts PB. On the solo circuit he won many prizes as a very skilled piper with a great ear for the music. At one time he was asked not to enter, so that others could have an opportunity to win.

Over the years he has taught and mentored many, many youngsters and some older people. Using his knowledge and skills he tutored the City of Napier's #2 band from 1982 to 1992 and also tutored the Napier Boys High School Pipe Band from 1976 to 1982, and again from 1992 to 2002, and both these bands achieved great things under his leadership. The #2 band for example, were close runners up in the 1992 national pipe band contest here in Napier. He set high standards, never letting you get away with any sloppy finger work.

In dealing with all the different people in the band and at the school, he was always willing to support them, young and old, by tutoring, guiding and helping them. The thing that all of us associate with Gray was the way he would pitch in and help anyone - with their pipes, their technique, their music.

Gray was awarded our President's Award in 2009 and a Life Membership in 2016 in recognition of his very positive and constructive contribution to pipe banding in Napier over many years, both fitting tributes to a man who loved his piping, who was so willing to share his wonderful talents and who has done so much for us.

It was a sad day when we played 'Going Home' for Gray on November 18.



Gray and Clare
Life Membership Award - 2016

The Picnic

It has been suggested we hold a social picnic event on **Monday 6 February** (no practice that night) at Eskdale Park from 2pm.

Bring your afternoon tea and games (and togs if you want to swim).

Final Night

Held at St Columba's Church in Taradale our final night once again featured everyone playing a variety of music on their instruments, concluding with a most enjoyable supper.

This year's awards:

Napier Caledonian Society Cups: Liam Reid (piping) and Amber Lumb-Peteli (drumming)

Band MPV awards: Grieg Madden (piping) and Wayne Valler (drumming)

Although labelled our final night, we still had some parades to do after that evening to cap off another very busy year. Once the band finished on New Year's eve we had done, over the past twelve months, 13 Inglesides, 18 parades for community organisations and individuals, 16 major street or community parades (including 5 Art Deco events), 4 band concerts and recitals, and 15 other band events including 4 Supporters' Nights - a total of 66 events, not including our regular Monday night and Saturday practices. That's a significant contribution of time and talent to our community - well done! And the good news is we'll do it all again this year!

Kerry Marshall

£500,000 Funding to Provide Bagpipe Lessons in Schools

Hundreds of children are to get the chance to learn how to play Scotland's national instrument following a £500,000 donation to support bagpipe lessons in schools. The Scottish Schools Pipes and Drums Trust (SSPDT) has announced plans to almost double its funding to finance lessons for pupils across the country in 2017. The initiative was launched in response to most state-school pupils not getting the chance to learn the pipes and drums on the same basis as other instruments. In its first year, more than 1,000 pupils in Scotland received tuition under schemes funded by the SSPDT which totalled around £275,000. Alexandra Dunn, SSPDT chief executive, said: "It is a shame that the vast majority of our young people are not offered the chance to learn our national instruments in schools. Our trust aims to protect the heritage of our national instrument but more importantly we aim to help improve outcomes for school pupils which will hopefully change lots of young people's lives for the better. Piping and being part of a band develops a wide range of life and employability skills including teamwork, individual and shared achievement, discipline, commitment and self-confidence as well as musicality." The SSPDT has also revealed the world's biggest schools bagpipe competition will again take place in Edinburgh in March. More than 700 piping pupils from about 120 schools will march into the capital for the Scottish Schools Pipe Band Championship to show off their talent across different categories.