

THE 41st

# NICOL-BROWN

AMATEUR INVITATIONAL PIPING COMPETITION



**OCTOBER 12, 2024**

SAINT MARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ♦ ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

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The Nicol-Brown committee has hosted an elite event for amateur pipers since 1982, thanks to the generous donors and volunteers who have given their time and financial support year after year. Nicol-Brown Chalice, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

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Checks in US dollars are always welcome. Make payable to Nicol-Brown Chalice, Inc. and mail to our treasurer:

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## The 2024 Nicol-Brown Weekend

The Nicol-Brown committee is proud to co-sponsor the concert and competition again this year with the Institute of Musical Traditions. Thanks to our generous, brilliant donors, including the Eastern United States Pipe Band Association, admission is free at all events, with donations accepted at the door or online.

**Saint Mark Presbyterian Church**  
10701 Old Georgetown Road  
Rockville, Maryland 20852

### FRIDAY, October 11

#### 7:30 pm The Judges' Concert

Roddy MacLeod, MBE and Ben McClamrock

### SATURDAY, October 12

#### The Nicol-Brown Invitational Competition

(Tentative Start Times)

9:30 am 6/8 Marches

11:30 am Group Photo Session and Lunch Break

12:45 pm Piobaireachd

4:30 pm March, Strathspey, and Reel

6:30 pm Awards Ceremony

8:00 pm Dinner by Reservation



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The Nicol-Brown committee welcomes the judges for 2024:

## Roddy MacLeod, MBE, and Ben McClamrock



**R**ODDY MacLEOD is one of the world's most accomplished and influential pipers. As a solo piper, he won the Gold Medal at the Northern Meeting in Inverness in 1986, and at Oban in 1988. Since then, he has won the Glenfiddich Piping Championship five times, the Silver Chanter seven times, the Northern Meeting Clasp twice, the Senior Piobaireachd at the Argyllshire Gathering twice and the Former Winners'

MSR twice. At the Scottish Piping Society of London Championship he has won the Bratach Gorm nine times, the Gillies Cup Open Piobaireachd nine times, the Former Winners' London Medallion MSR five times and the Overall Championship eight times. Roddy's career in pipe bands includes a decade as Pipe Major of the Grade One Scottish Power Pipe Band, and the formation and leadership of the Spirit of Scotland Pipe Band. Roddy was the Principal of the National Piping Centre in Glasgow from its founding in 1996 until 2020. His work there to initiate forward-looking programs is still changing the piping world. In 2003, Roddy MacLeod was made a Member of the British Empire in recognition of his services to piping, and in 2012, he was inducted into the Scottish Traditional Music

Awards Hall of Fame. At the Glenfiddich Championships in 2023, Roddy was awarded the Balvenie Medal for Services to Piping.

**B**EN McCLAMROCK was born and raised in Baltimore, Maryland, but now resides in Washington, DC where he works as a data analyst. Ben started piping at the age of nine and became a professional soloist at the age of 17. He travels extensively to compete and is a consistent prize winner in the United States, Canada, and Scotland. Some of his top prizes include winning the Silver Medal at the Argyllshire Gathering, Oban (2019); the US Gold Medal for Piobaireachd (2024); the 2024 Piobaireachd Society Gold Medal (Canada); 3rd Place in the A-Grade Marches (2017) and A-Grade Strathspey and Reel (2018) at Oban; top overseas piper at the Braemar Highland Gathering (2016); 3rd Place in the A MSR at Inverness (2013); and 2nd overall at the United States Piping Foundation (2017, 2022). In addition to solo competitions, Ben is the head piping instructor for the Maryland Youth Pipe Band, formerly known as the Rockville High School Pipe Band. He currently receives piping instruction from William McCallum of Bearsden, Scotland.



## Previous Judges for the Nicol-Brown Amateur Invitational Competition

1982	Ed Neigh	2003	Bruce Gandy and Michael Rogers
1983	James McGillivray	2004	Stuart Liddell and Donald F. Lindsay
1984	Murray Henderson	2005	Donald MacPhee
1985	Donald F. Lindsay	2006	John Wilson and Alasdair Gillies
1986	William Livingstone	2007	John Wilson and Nancy Tunnicliffe
1987	Amy Garson, Ed Krintz, and Chip Reardon	2008	Nancy Tunnicliffe, Bobby Minnear, R. Iain MacDonald
1988	Donald F. Lindsay	2009	Murray Henderson, Amy Garson, and Andrew Douglas
1989	Seumas MacNeill	2010	Angus MacColl
1990	James McGillivray	2011	Jack Taylor and Bruce Gandy
1991	Colin MacLellan	2012	Willie McCallum, Nancy Tunnicliffe, Paula Glendinning
1992	The contest was not held.	2013	Patrick Molard, Andrew Hayes, and June Hanley
1993	George Bell and Donald F. Lindsay	2014	Andrew Hayes and Michael Rogers
1994	Colin MacLellan and Donald F. Lindsay	2015	Callum Beaumont
1995	Bob Worrall	2016	Willie McCallum and Nick Hudson
1996	Scott MacAulay and Donald F. Lindsay	2017	Ian K. MacDonald, Andrew Lee, and Ben McClamrock
1997	Donald F. Lindsay	2018	Nancy Tunnicliffe and Eric Ouellette
1998	Jack Lee	2019	Callum Beaumont, Faye Henderson, and Matt MacIsaac
1999	Michael Cusack	2020	Matt MacIsaac, Patrick Molard, Sarah Muir, Jack Taylor
2000	Alasdair Gillies	2021	Jenny Hazzard, Nick Hudson, Roddy MacLeod, Bob Worrall
2001	Michael Rogers	2022	The contest was not held.
2002	Jack Taylor	2023	Jack Taylor and Nick Hudson



The members of the Executive Committee of the Eastern United States Pipe Band Association offer their sincere appreciation to

**Roddy MacLeod, MBE and Ben McClamrock**

and best wishes to all of the competitors, volunteers, organizers, and spectators at the 41st Nicol-Brown Amateur Invitational Piping Competition. This is truly one of the premier amateur piping events in the world and it is an honor to be a sponsor.

## **EUSPBA Executive Committee**

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**Please join us for the  
2024 Annual General Meeting (AGM)  
on Saturday, December 7, 2024.**

**(The Judges' Seminar will follow on Sunday, December 8.)**

The 2024 AGM and Judges' Seminar will be held virtually. Further information can be found in the Friday News Update emails and on the EUSPBA Web site.

**Saturday:** Officers' Reports / Branch Proposals / New Business

**Sunday:** Judges' Seminar

**[www.euspba.org](http://www.euspba.org)**

**For more information, please contact:**

Executive Secretary Jim Engle at [zecsec@euspba.org](mailto:zecsec@euspba.org)

# The 2024 Competitors

## **GILLIAN BLANEY** Lower Sackville, Nova Scotia

Gillian is a recent graduate of the Child and Youth Care program at Nova Scotia Community College. At the age of seven, Gillian started playing bagpipes at the Halifax Citadel School of Music and she has been taking lessons from Bruce Gandy since she was eight. Most recently, Gillian competed with the Dartmouth and District Pipe Band, placing 2nd in Grade 3A at the World Pipe Band Championships. Some of Gillian's solo piping highlights for the 2024 season include: winning the MSR at the Metro Cup; placing 1st in all four events for the February online CLASP contest; placing 1st in the MSR and 4th in the Piobaireachd in the CLASP Champion of Champions Invitational Competition; winning the Piobaireachd at the US Piping Foundation; and winning the Grade One Allan B. Beaton Memorial Trophy at the Antigonish Highland Games. When Gillian is not competing, she enjoys teaching piping to young people, as well as curling at Lakeshore Curling Club in Lower Sackville. She is honoured to be invited to the 2024 Nicol-Brown.

## **DR. KARL FETTER** Athens, Georgia

Karl began piping at the age of 12 and was a founding member of the Jamestown Pipes & Drums and long-time member of the Grandfather Mountain Highlanders Pipe Band. Karl grew up in Greensboro, North Carolina, where he received piping instruction from Kyle Auman and from Robert Bell. In 2007, Karl received a Phillips Scholarship from UNC Chapel Hill to study piping at the National Piping Centre for three months. After an 11-year break in piping, Karl has returned to the boards and has been an active competitor this year. Professionally, Karl is a USDA Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the Plant Computational Genomics Lab at the University of Connecticut. Karl is a conservation geneticist working to breed resilience to pests and climate change into eastern forest trees. In particular, Karl works on conservation of the Eastern Hemlock and Butternut trees.

## **LIAM FORREST** Mission, British Columbia

Liam is 18 years old and began playing pipes at age 8 with lessons from Glen Robertson. He now gets lessons from Andrew Lee and Alan Bevan. In the 2024 season, Liam joined the Simon Fraser University Pipe Band, became a finalist for the MacGregor Memorial Piobaireachd Competition in Oban, Scotland, and won the Grand Aggregate in the BC Pipers' Grade 1 class. This fall, he started university to earn a degree in physics.

## **MALACHI JOHANNSEN** Modesto, California

Malachi is a 17-year-old, homeschooled senior from Modesto, California. He has been piping since he was seven years old; beginning his instruction under Pipe Major Gary Speed and then with Pipe Major Elizabeth Tubbs of the City of Sacramento Pipe Band. He is a current student of Jack Lee and an active member of the Silicon Valley Grade 3 Pipe Band in Saratoga, California. Malachi enjoyed a successful solo year in Grade One. He placed fourth in Piobaireachd at Winter Storm in Kansas City, Missouri. Malachi won Aggregate Piper of Grade 1 at the annual Redding Bagpipe Competition in Redding, California, securing an invitation to the Sandy Jones Memorial Amateur Championship Invitational in Orlando, Florida. He was accepted as a participant for the MacGregor Memorial and Argyllshire Gathering this summer in Oban, Scotland. In addition, he played the Under-18 Piobaireachd and Under-18 MSR competitions at the Northern Meeting in Inverness, placing third in his Piobaireachd. When he is not piping, Malachi enjoys playing a variety of other instruments. Upon graduation this year, Malachi hopes to attend flight school to become a pilot. He would like to thank his parents and family, members of the St. Florian Pipers Society, and members of the Silicon Valley Pipe Band for their continued support in his piping journey.

## **THOMAS McCOLLUM** Deerton, Michigan

Thomas is a 19-year-old piper who was raised in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. He started piping when he was eight. Over the years, he has developed his piping ability under the tutelage of Andrew Duncan, Craig Munro, and other world-class pipers. He has competed successfully throughout North America and Scotland. Thomas played with the Alma College Pipe Band through high school, which included a trip to the British Pipe Band Championship in 2022. He more recently

*(Continued on page 7)*



### **The Institute of Musical Traditions**

IMT is an independent, nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization which preserves and promotes American and international folk music traditions and nurtures new styles evolving from these cultural roots by presenting concerts, workshops, and educational programs. IMT was born in 1988 from a concert series started by David Eisner, the owner of the House of Musical Traditions in Takoma Park, Maryland. IMT's world-class performances, programs, and other activities are funded through corporate donations, foundations and public funding agencies, but mostly through ticket sales and contributions from individual supporters.

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competed in the Balmoral Classic U.S. Junior Solo Piping Championship in November 2023. Tom currently plays with the Grade 2 Great Lakes Pipe Band based in Cleveland, Ohio. Tom is a sophomore at Michigan State University and is pursuing a degree in chemical engineering. In his spare time, Tom is a member of the 2023 MSU National Champion dodgeball squad. He plans to spend next summer in Scotland, playing with the Uddingston Pipe Band and competing in the solo circuit.

**FLORA STONE** **Natick, Massachusetts**

Flora is 17 years old, and has been playing the bagpipes since 2019. She takes lessons online with Glenn Brown, Callum Beaumont and Margaret Dunn. Flora performed at Piping Live's Emerging Talent in 2023, playing her own original compositions with backing tracks. She has played in the Balmoral Classic and the Sun Belt Invitational, and took prizes in both. She is currently 3rd on the EUSPBA leaderboard, and is looking forward to another successful season next year.

**MAGNUS STONE** **Natick, Massachusetts**

Magnus is 16 years old, and took up the pipes at the age of 11. He began ongoing online lessons in 2020, studying under notable Scottish players such as Glenn Brown, Margaret Dunn, and Callum Beaumont. Magnus has had a successful second season in Grade 1, taking 1st place in over 25 events this year. His dedication to the craft is evident not only in his competitive success but also in his creative pursuits; he enjoys composing and creating modern music with a variety of traditional instruments. After a year of hard work, Magnus hopes to end the season with strong performances throughout the amateur invitationals and looks forward to piping success in 2025.

**JESSICA THERIAULT** **Dartmouth, Nova Scotia**

Jessica is currently a Medical Laboratory Technologist in Halifax, Nova Scotia. She began learning bagpipes at the age of nine from her grandfather, James Bain, who had received tuition from both Bob Nicol and Bob Brown in the past. Jessica joined the Dartmouth and District Pipe Band at the age of 10 and eventually took on the role of Pipe Major of their Grade 5 band. Jessica recently retired from the Pipe Major position to enjoy more time with her 1-year-old son, Henry. Jessica is currently a member of the 78th Highlanders Halifax Citadel Pipe Band and receives tuition from the band's Pipe Major, Alex Gandy.

**ADAM TINGSKOU** **Winnipeg, Manitoba**

Originally from Winnipeg, Adam started learning pipes in the Lord Selkirk Robert Fraser Memorial Pipe Band under Robert Fraser, and later received solo instruction from Wes Sheppard. He has been a member of the St. Andrew's Society of Winnipeg Pipe Band, the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada Pipes & Drums, the Fredericton Society of St. Andrews Pipe Band, and the 78th Fraser Highlanders Pipe Band since 2016.

Notable highlights from the 2024 season include Amateur Piper of the Day at: the Northumberland Highland Games in Port Hope, Ontario, the Kingsville, Ontario Highland Games, and the Glengarry Highland Games in Maxville, Ontario. Adam has been employed as a piper in the Canadian Armed Forces since 2014 and is currently appointed Pipe Major of the 2 Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group Pipes & Drums located in Petawawa, Ontario.

**MICHAEL TRENOR** **Columbus, Ohio**

Mic started piping in 1979 under the late Bob Ryan through the local Irish club. He entered the competition ranks under the guidance of the late Noel Slagle and The Captain, Ken Eller. After rising through the ranks to Grade 1 in the 1980s, Mic retired in 1991. He spent the next 25 years teaching local pipers and giving back to the piping community in Ohio. Through the encouragement of his wife, Katrisha, Mic went back on the boards in 2018. Continuing his lessons with Ken Eller, he would see great success. He was Piper of the Day this year at the Rose and Shamrock Festival, the Ohio Valley Indoor, the Cincinnati Indoor, and Grandfather Mountain. In addition, he took the MSR at Fair Hill, Maryland, and the Senior Amateur Piobaireachd in Kincardine, Ontario with the PPBSO. Mic continues to teach, volunteer at Highland Games, and contribute to his piping community. He plays with the Grade 2 Great Lakes Pipe Band. Mic is a carpenter by trade and lives in Columbus, Ohio with his wife, Katrisha, and their son Ethan.



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contribution to piping.**

**Best wishes for excellent music  
by all the competitors.**



# 6/8 Marches

(The competitors have each chosen two tunes to play in this order.)

## 1. DR. KARL FETTER

The MacNeils of Ugadale  
Mrs. Lily Christie

## 2. LIAM FORREST

Major John MacLennan, Gordon Highlanders  
Cameron MacFadyen

## 3. JESSICA THERIAULT

Ben Gullion  
Dornoch Highland Gathering

## 4. MALACHI JOHANNSEN

Leaving Port Askaig  
The Trees of North Uist

## 5. FLORA STONE

Bengullion  
Meg MacRae

## 6. MAGNUS STONE

The Trees of North Uist  
Duncan McGillivray, Chief Steward

## 7. THOMAS McCOLLUM

The Heights of Cassino  
Dornoch Highland Gathering

## 8. ADAM TINGSKOU

Pipe Major Donald MacLean of Lewis  
Mrs. Lily Christie

## 9. MICHAEL TRENOR

Pipe Major Donald MacLean of Lewis  
A Cold Wind From Ben Wyvis

## 10. GILLIAN BLANEY

The Scottish Division  
Bengullion

## IMPORTANT PHOTO OP

Please meet next to the stage immediately following the final 6/8 March performance for the official 2024 group photo of the competitors and judges. Weather permitting, outdoor photos will also be taken at this time.

PLEASE WEAR YOUR NICOL-BROWN LAPEL PIN!

# Piobaireachd

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

## 1. FLORA STONE

The Massacre of Glencoe  
**Lament for Donald of Laggan**  
MacLeod's Controversy

## 2. MAGNUS STONE

The King's Taxes  
The Battle of Auldearn #2  
**Ronald MacDonald of Morar's Lament**

## 3. THOMAS McCOLLUM

The Desperate Battle  
The Little Spree  
**The Piper's Warning to His Master**

## 4. ADAM TINGSKOU

**Lament for Mary MacLeod**  
The Field of Gold  
The Unjust Incarceration

## 5. MICHAEL TRENOR

A Flame of Wrath for Patrick Caogach  
**The Battle of Auldearn #2**  
The Sound of The Waves Against the Castle of Duntroon

## 6. GILLIAN BLANEY

Andrew MacNeill of Colonsay  
**The Big Spree**  
The Eagle Pipers' Society

## 7. DR. KARL FETTER

**The King's Taxes**  
The Massacre of Glencoe  
The Battle of Auldearn #1

## 8. LIAM FORREST

The Desperate Battle  
Lament for Mary MacLeod  
**Lord Lovat's Lament**

## 9. JESSICA THERIAULT

The Phantom Piper of Corrieyairack  
**Melbank's Salute**  
Lord Lovat's Lament

## 10. MALACHI JOHANNSEN

**Lament for the Iolaire**  
Lord Lovat's Lament (The Kilberry setting from David Fraser)  
The Phantom Piper of Corrieyairack



# March, Strathspey, and Reel

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

## 1. ADAM TINGSKOU

2/4 Marches: Jimmy Young  
**Major Manson at Clachantrushal**  
Strathspeys: **Cabar Feidh**  
Dora MacLeod  
Reels: **The Cockerel in the Creel**  
Sandy Cameron

## 2. MICHAEL TRENOR

2/4 Marches: **South Hall**  
Mr. Donald Shaw, S.S.C.  
Strathspeys: **Maggie Cameron**  
Susan MacLeod  
Reels: Major Manson  
**The Grey Bob**

## 3. GILLIAN BLANEY

2/4 Marches: **Roineabhal Cottage**  
The Knightswood Ceilidh  
Strathspeys: The Ewe with the Crooked Horn  
**Crann Tara**  
Reels: **Dolina MacKay**  
Willie Murray's Reel

## 4. DR. KARL FETTER

2/4 Marches: **MacLean of Pennycross**  
The Young MacGregor  
Strathspeys: Maggie Cameron  
**The Ewe with the Crooked Horn**  
Reels: Sandy Cameron  
**The Rejected Suitor**

## 5. LIAM FORREST

2/4 Marches: **John MacColl's March to Kilbowie Cottage**  
John MacDonald of Glencoe  
Strathspeys: Arniston Castle  
**The Piper's Bonnet**  
Reels: Alick C. MacGregor  
**Mrs. MacPherson of Inveran**

## 6. JESSICA THERIAULT

2/4 Marches: Doctor Allan MacDonald  
**Morag Ramsay**  
Strathspeys: **Susan MacLeod**  
The Bob of Fettercairn  
Reels: The Grey Bob  
**Traditional**

## 7. MALACHI JOHANNSEN

2/4 Marches: **The Knightswood Ceilidh**  
The Glasgow Skye Association Centenary  
Gathering  
Strathspeys: **Lady Louden**  
The Shepherd's Crook  
Reels: Mrs. MacPherson of Inveran  
**Sandy Cameron**

## 8. FLORA STONE

2/4 Marches: **The Edinburgh City Police Pipe Band**  
The Knightswood Ceilidh  
Strathspeys: **The Bob of Fettercairn**  
John Roy Stewart  
Reels: Willie Cumming's Rant  
**Sheila MacMurchy's Dance**

## 9. MAGNUS STONE

2/4 Marches: Major Manson at Clachantrushal  
**The Duke of Roxburgh's Farewell to the  
Blackmount Forest**  
Strathspeys: Cabar Feidh  
**Tulloch Castle**  
Reels: **John Garroway**  
Bessie MacIntyre

## 10. THOMAS McCOLLUM

2/4 Marches: Mrs. John MacColl  
**91st at Modder River**  
Strathspeys: **The Islay Ball**  
The Piper's Bonnet  
Reels: Sandy Cameron  
**The Little Cascade**



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# 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 Contest 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 of 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.

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 — a testimony to the influence that the contest has had on the lives of so many pipers.

## 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 work. This 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, “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 unflinching 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. Nicol 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 world’s outstanding pipers, 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*.)

**"The Bobs with glengarries"  
just doesn't sound right . . .**



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## 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 *The Piper's Handbook* by P/M John 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 available to all pipers in a comprehensive CD series.

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

—by Iain MacDonald (Regina, Saskatchewan)



United  
States  
Piping  
Foundation 

The USPF extends sincere congratulations to all the invited competitors at this year's Nicol-Brown Amateur Invitational! Enjoy the experience!

The USPF hosts the Maclean Macleod Memorial Piping Competition each year, offering Piobaireachd and March, Strathspey, & Reel events for Professional and Amateur competitors.

[www.uspipingfoundation.org](http://www.uspipingfoundation.org)



## Nicol-Brown Chalice For Piobaireachd

- 1982 Nancy Crutcher: "Lament for Donald Duaghall MacKay"  
 1983 Ian Beatty: "Black Donald's March"  
 1984 Robert Minnear: "Lament for Donald Duaghall 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"  
 2008 Johnny Bassett: "The MacGregors' Salute"  
 2009 Anthony Masterson: "The Mackays' Banner"  
 2010 Robert Durning: "Lament for the Viscount of Dundee"  
 2011 Joseph Stewart: "The Red Speckled Bull"  
 2012 Alexander Schiele: "The King's Taxes"  
 2013 Andrew Mackay: "The Massacre of Glencoe"  
 2014 James Dyson: "MacCrimmon's Sweetheart"  
 2015 Kevin McLean: "The Red Speckled Bull"  
 2016 Andrew Hutton: "MacLeod of Raasay's Salute"  
 2017 Laureano Thomas-Sanchez: "Lament for the Earl of Antrim"  
 2018 Filemon Tan: "Lament for the Only Son"  
 2019 Blaise Theriault: "The Massacre of Glencoe"  
 2020 Stuart H. Marshall: "The MacLeods' Salute"  
 2021 Callum Bevan: "Corrienessan's Salute"  
 2022 The contest was not held.  
 2023 Colin Forrest: "The Groat"

## William Ross Challenge Targe for MSR

- |                        |                           |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1987 Alasdair Wright   | 2006 Micah Babinski       |
| 1988 Daniel Whatley    | 2007 Alastair Lee         |
| 1989 Ken McKeveny      | 2008 John Lee             |
| 1990 Robert Boyd       | 2009 Anthony Masterson    |
| 1991 Alan Bevan        | 2010 Glenn Walpole        |
| 1993 Paula Glendinning | 2011 Ursa Beckford        |
| 1994 Jason Briscoe     | 2012 Alexander Schiele    |
| 1995 Michael Rogers    | 2013 Liam Hilder          |
| 1996 Michael Rogers    | 2014 Liam Hilder          |
| 1997 Steven Tripp      | 2015 James Dyson          |
| 1998 Andrew Douglas    | 2016 Austin Diepenhorst   |
| 1999 Glenn Brown       | 2017 Alistair Bevan       |
| 2000 Glenn Brown       | 2018 Filemon Tan          |
| 2001 Lionel Tupman     | 2019 Joseph Horwath       |
| 2002 Lionel Tupman     | 2020 Henry Michael Paluch |
| 2003 Lyric Todkill     | 2021 Henry Michael Paluch |
| 2004 Andrew Lewis      | 2023 Cameron Bonar        |
| 2005 Alex Gandy        |                           |

## Donald MacLeod Memorial 6/8 Marches

- |                         |                           |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1990 P. Andrew L. Hayes | 2007 Gordon Conn          |
| 1991 Alan Bevan         | 2008 Johnny Bassett       |
| 1993 Jamie Troy         | 2009 Richard Gillies      |
| 1994 Ryan MacDonald     | 2010 Chris Lee            |
| 1995 Paula Glendinning  | 2011 Joseph Stewart       |
| 1996 Ryan MacDonald     | 2012 Joseph Stewart       |
| 1997 Joss Fisher        | 2013 Jack Williamson      |
| 1998 Andrew Douglas     | 2014 Tyler Bridge         |
| 1999 Glenn Brown        | 2015 Tyler Bridge         |
| 2000 Andrew J. Hayes    | 2016 Andrew Hutton        |
| 2001 Lionel Tupman      | 2017 Alistair Bevan       |
| 2002 Lionel Tupman      | 2018 Alistair Bevan       |
| 2003 Lyric Todkill      | 2019 Alistair Bevan       |
| 2004 Robert Beaton      | 2020 Henry Michael Paluch |
| 2005 Colin Lee          | 2021 Stuart H. Marshall   |
| 2006 Kegan Sheehan      | 2023 Colin Forrest        |

# 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. Inspired by the Ardagh Chalice, c. 800-899 AD, the Nicol-Brown Chalice was designed as a symbol of the pursuit of excellence in Celtic art and music. Brian described the Chalice project as a "cathedral" which would take years to complete. Decades later, Stephen Walker of Walker Metalsmiths volunteered many hours of his artistic skills to bring the cathedral to completion, and it is a masterpiece.

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 targe in honor of P/M William Ross.

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 to the winner. In 2007, Stephen Walker designed a new edition of the silver buckle, to be awarded as a gift from Stephen for the 17th 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.

The overall Nicol-Brown champion for 2024 will win \$1000.00 USD for travel expenses to compete in a major competition in 2025, to be approved by the Nicol-Brown committee. The prize is donated by the NHScot Fund. Over the years, this prize has added to the lives of amateur pipers and has helped many take the next step toward Open piping and elite international competitive careers.



## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Donald F. Lindsay, Founder  
Kathleen Brown  
Judy Campbell  
Jim Feeney  
Paula Glendinning  
June Hanley  
Ben McClamrock  
Thompson McConnell, Treasurer  
JoAnn Scott  
Chris Shepherd, Chief Steward  
Jane Spicer

## DONORS AND VOLUNTEERS

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Olivia Corcoran  
Betsy and Bruce Douglas  
Keith Earle  
David Eisner  
Eastern U. S. Pipe Band Association  
Tom Finnell  
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Doreen Forney  
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Jackson Galloway  
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Walker Metalsmiths Celtic Jewelry  
Rick Woolard  
Bob Worrall

## SPECIAL GIFTS

Competitors and judges will receive a Nicol-Brown lapel pin to mark their participation in this important event. Henderson Imports, Ltd. has donated a \$50 certificate for each competitor, as well as a generous sponsorship donation. Jack Lee has donated a \$25 voucher for tunes and recordings at BagpipeMusic.com for each competitor.

## DEDICATIONS

Jeffrey Foote's donation was given in support of a great piping community.  
Doreen Forney's donation was given in memory of Pipe Major Angus Macdonald.  
Charlie and Paula Glendinning's donation was given in memory of Ken Eller.  
Catriona Hill's donation was given in memory of her friend, Connie Powell, who loved piping very much.  
Todd Jacob's donation was given in support of his brother from another mother, Mic Trenor.  
Cathi Nixon's donation was given in memory of her father, Sandy Jones.  
Rick Woolard's donation was given in memory of Ronald Morrison of South Uist.  
Bob Worrall's donation was given in memory of Ken Eller.



# Results of the 41st Nicol-Brown Amateur Invitational Competition

October 12, 2024 ~~~ Rockville, Maryland

Judges: Roddy MacLeod, MBE and Ben McClamrock

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## OVERALL NICOL-BROWN CHAMPIONSHIP

## PRIZES

1. GILLIAN BLANEY (18 points) The Nicol-Brown Champion's Pipe Chanter, donated by McCallum Bagpipes (Scotland); the choice of any pipe bag from Lee & Sons Bagpipes (British Columbia) donated by Jack Lee; plus travel expenses up to \$1000.00 USD, donated by the NHSCOT Fund (New Hampshire) to be used to compete in a major solo contest in 2025 as approved by the Nicol-Brown committee.
2. MALACHI JOHANNSEN (13 points) \$500.00 piping scholarship donated by Cathi Nixon (Tennessee) in memory of her father, Sandy Jones.
3. MAGNUS STONE (9 points) \$300.00 piping scholarship sponsored by Doreen Forney (Vermont) in memory of Pipe Major Angus Macdonald, 1st Battalion, Scots Guards.
4. MICHAEL TRENOR (7 points) \$200.00 piping scholarship sponsored by Jane and Jim Spicer (Maryland).
5. DR. KARL FETTER (6 points/Piob. Pref.) \$100.00 piping scholarship sponsored by Betsy and Bruce Douglas (New York).

## THE ROBERT NICOL-ROBERT BROWN CHALICE FOR PIOBAIREACHD

1. GILLIAN BLANEY (9 points) A bound copy of the *Piobaireachd Society Collection*, Volumes 1-16, with personalized presentation page, donated by Jon Maffett of The Piper's Hut (Pickerington, Ohio).
2. MALACHI JOHANNSEN (7 points)
3. DR. KARL FETTER (6 points)
4. MICHAEL TRENOR (5 points)
5. FLORA STONE (4 points)

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

1. GILLIAN BLANEY (8 points) A McCallum long blackwood practice chanter with custom-engraved sole, bowl, and presentation ferrule, donated by Andrew Douglas of The Piper's Dojo (Troy, New York).
2. JESSICA THERIAULT (6 points)
3. MAGNUS STONE (5 points)
4. ADAM TINGSKOU (4 points)
5. MALACHI JOHANNSEN (3 points)

## THE DONALD MACLEOD MEMORIAL 6/8 MARCHES

1. LIAM FORREST (6 points) The Donald MacLeod Memorial Sterling Silver Buckle created and donated by Stephen Walker of Walker Metalsmiths Celtic Jewelry (Andover, New York).
2. MAGNUS STONE (4 points)
3. MALACHI JOHANNSEN (3 points)
4. MICHAEL TRENOR (2 points)
5. GILLIAN BLANEY (1 point)

## DRESS AND DEPARTMENT

- LIAM FORREST \$100 gift certificate for The Piper's Hut, sponsored by Doreen Forney (Vermont) in memory of Pipe Major Angus Macdonald, 1st Battalion Scots Guards.

Save the Date for Next Year!

October 11, 2025

The Nicol-Brown Contest is held on the Saturday before Columbus Day / Canadian Thanksgiving.

[nicol-brown.org](http://nicol-brown.org)