

THE PIPES AND DRUMS OF MANITOBA

HISTORY

The Pipes and Drums of Manitoba was formed nearly 60 years ago by a group of dedicated pipers and drummers who loved Scottish music and wanted to share their love of it with others.

Attracting members from various bands from Winnipeg and the surrounding area, the band first performed as a massed band with pipers and drummers wearing the many different uniforms of their respective bands.

When the Manitoba tartan became the official tartan of the Province of Manitoba in 1962, it was selected as the band's tartan of choice. The official uniform for the band was the Manitoba tartan worn with a white military doublet and traditional feather bonnet. The Manitoba Buffalo emblem is worn as collar dogs to further identify the band as Manitoba. Since that time, the uniform has undergone changes to more reflect the times, and for consideration of the members and the venues at which they perform. It will always respect its relationship with the Province of Manitoba.

The band was incorporated in 1973 as "The Massed Pipes and Drums of Winnipeg" and was formed as a venue for integrating pipe bands from all of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Northwestern Ontario. Unfortunately, the exact numbers of pipers and drummers forming the band at its origin was never officially recorded, but those registered as "interested" numbered 265.

In 1973, the Massed Band attended the Tournament of Roses parade in Pasadena California, at its largest strength ever, 265+ marching members. The following year, in 1974, the Rose Bowl parade officials were anxious for the band to again participate, and offered to have the Massed Band lead the parade. We are told this was the first time in parade history that a band other than the official Rose Bowl Parade band led the parade and was also the first repeat invited band in the history of the parade.

Also in 1974, the band was featured at Expo 74 Canada Week at the Worlds Fair in Spokane, Washington. In 1975, the band performed at the Calgary Stampede, and in 1977, marked the band's first association with World Curling as they attended the "Silver Broom" in Karlstad Sweden, and continued that association in Winnipeg in 1978 and in Berne, Switzerland in 1979.

In 1984, the band underwent a major reconfiguration and was restructured, renamed and reincorporated in the Province of Manitoba under the name "The Massed Pipes and Drums of Manitoba". Though that is the official name, the band is commonly referred to as "The Pipes and Drums of Manitoba". Norman A. MacDonald was appointed Pipe Major, a position he held through 2005. The

band is indebted to Pipe Major Norman MacDonald for his dedication and leadership through some turbulent times involving restructuring and reorganization.

During the 1990s the band was the official band for World Curling in Vasteras, Sweden; Garmisch Partenkirchen, Germany; Berne, Switzerland and Oberstdorf, Germany, and has maintained its involvement with Folklorama and other community events in the City and Province. Annually, International Falls, MN invites the band to perform at their July 4th celebrations and we take great pleasure in representing Winnipeg, Manitoba and Canada there.

Details as to the leadership of the band over the years is sketchy. We do know that the first Pipe Major was Bertie MacDonald. The interval between Bertie MacDonald and Norman MacDonald is not recorded in any detail. However, as previously mentioned, Norman MacDonald gave years of service as Pipe Major. In opting for retirement in 2005, Norman was replaced by Ron McFarlane who is the serving Pipe Major at the time of writing.

The history of the band would not be complete without recognizing Ken Steubing, who was one of the founding members of the band and a driving force during the early years. From what we know of Ken Steubing, he was a "straight ahead" leader neither looking left or right, but always with best interests of the band first and foremost. Ken passed away in November of 2010 at the age of 92.

There are others who may know the history of the Pipes and Drums in more detail than the present membership, and we would welcome their input.

Respectfully submitted by Ron McFarlane