

THE "How To"
PIOBACHD MANUAL AND CD

A PIPER'S AID TO READING,
UNDERSTANDING AND PLAYING – CEOL MOR



BY

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LONDON, ONTARIO, CANADA

THE "HOW TO" PIOBAIREACHD MANUAL AND CD

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MY PIPING CAREER

Piping has been a major part of my life, my career and my profession for over 65 years.

I was born in 1928 in Hamilton, Ontario and began piping when I was 9 years old, with my father, Pipe Major John Knox Cairns as my tutor. I was a wee boy and a member of a Scottish Variety Troupe that performed in theaters and at stage shows throughout southern Ontario for some 7 years. I sang the Scottish songs of Sir Harry Lauder and later added the playing of the bagpipe to my "act", both solo and for a Highland Dancer.

From playing in a Boys Brigade Pipe Band in Hamilton, in 1941 I enrolled in my father's regiment, serving continuously in the Canadian Forces, both Regular and Reserve Force, for 52 years - as Boy Piper, Piper, Pipe Cpl, Pipe Sgt, Pipe Major, and a commissioned officer.

Some of the major, significant dates/events for me during this time are:

1941 (23 June): Enrolled as a Boy Piper in the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders of Canada (PL).

1948/49: Was youngest Piper ever to win the then-coveted Hendrie Gold Medal for Piobaireachd in 1948 and the Clasp in 1949 at Hamilton, Ontario.

1952 (Oct): Appointed Pipe Major of A&SH of C - 2 months after my father died.

1954 (6 May): Enrolled in Regular Force as P/M 2nd Bn The Canadian Guards.

1963/64: Graduated 1st in my class, with a Distinguished Pass, on the P/M's Course, Edinburgh Castle, under Capt John MacLellan.

1968: a. Retired from active solo competition after 30 years of successfully competing in Eastern Canada and North Eastern U.S.A.;

b. Was the first to be appointed Senior Pipe Major in the Canadian Forces, a position I held for 13 years; and

c. Began adjudicating piping contests which today, over 35 years later, I am still doing.

1971: Founded, and 1st President, of Ottawa Branch, Pipers & Pipe Band Society of Ontario.

1972: a. Co-founded and was Coordinator for the City of Ottawa Highland Games; and

b. Established the Piobaireachd Society Gold Medal (Canada) - picture - story - page 89.

1973 (July): Gained the Diploma of Piping and Senior Teacher's Certificate from, and was appointed an External Examiner for the Institute of Piping, Scotland.

1974: Was awarded the newly established (1 July 1972) Order of Military Merit.

1981: a. 3 July - retired from the Regular Force (after 27 years) - enrolled and was commissioned in the Reserve Force Cadet Instructor's List as a Captain. I commenced full-time employment as Commanding Officer of the newly established Cadet School of Pipes and Drums in London, Ontario; and

b. a member of the Piobaireachd Society, I was signally honoured by being the first North American born Piper to be appointed to the Society's Adjudicator's List, on which I am a Senior Judge for both Ceol Mor and Ceol Beag.

1983: a. Promoted to Major - the rank I retained until I retired from the Canadian Forces in September 1993; and

b. November - I took over as Pipe Major of the London Police Pipes & Drums, a position I still hold today - some 20 years later.

My sole profession has been that of a Piper/International Adjudicator/Lecturer/Teacher/published Composer-Arranger of Pipe Music. In addition to 2 military Pipes & Drums publications, this is the 5th Book I have written and had published.

MY THREE TEACHERS

1. Their teachers were:

Lt Charles Dunbar, D.C.M.
1870 - 1939



P/M John K Cairns
1896 - 1952

Roderick Campbell
1873 - 1937



P/M John Wilson
1906 - 1979

P/M William Ross, MBE
1879 - 1966
and
P/M John MacDonald, MBE
(Inverness) 1866 - 1953



Capt John A MacLellan, MBE
1921 - 1991

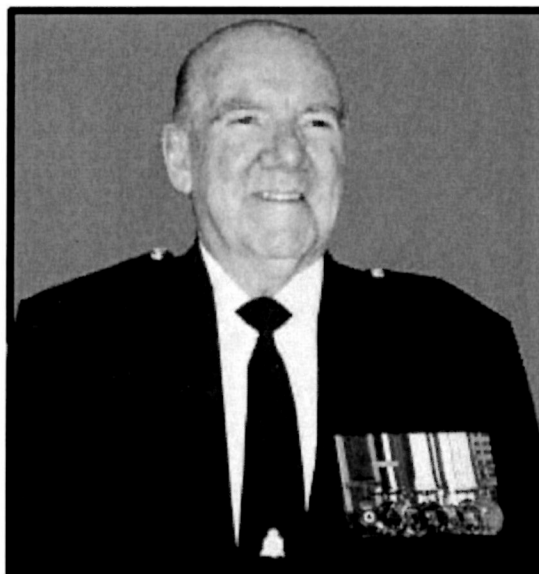
(photo reprinted by kind permission
of The College of Piping, Glasgow)

2. They taught me for:

(15 Years)

(4 Years)

(27 Years)



Major A.M. CAIRNS, MMM, CD
1928 -