

St. Andrew's Society Pipe Bands, Grades 2 & 3

In the spring of 1973, several graduates of the Lord Selkirk Boy Scout Pipe Band (LSBSPB) approached Pipe Major Robert Fraser, founder of the Lord Selkirk Boy Scout Pipe Band, and asked if he would be interested in starting up a senior band. The St. Andrew's Society of Winnipeg was approached as a possible sponsor and immediately approved of the plan. The Band adopted the Earl of St. Andrews tartan, and held its first practice on November 15, 1973.

The Band regularly performed at various town parades and St. Andrew's Society of Winnipeg functions, as well as at several White Heather Concerts, and on stage with such notable entertainers as Andy Stewart, Kenneth McKellar, Helen McArthur, Ron Dale, and the Alexander Brothers. Other notable appearances include concerts with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, the World Curling Championships, the Royal Visit of 1984, and the Opening Ceremonies of the 1999 Pan American Games.

The Band maintained its mandate of entertainment for many years, but in the late 1980's altered its course to include competition. In 1992, the Band played at the World Pipe Band Championships, the Cowal Games, and the Crieff Games in Scotland, where they quickly learned a lot more was needed to play at the International level. Locally, however, the Band continued to improve at the Grade 3 level with competitions in Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

Pipe Major Bob Stankey took over operations of the Band while Pipe Major Fraser continued with the tone quality and the music selection. With the change to Sinclair chanters, the Band's sound continued to improve, as did their success abroad, placing in the prizes at contests in both Canmore, and Calgary in 1997. By this time, the Band was winning consistently at the local contests, and had earned themselves the PPBAM Manitoba Champion Supreme award for Grade 3 by 2000. They have won this title in their respective grade every year since.

In 2001, 2002, and 2003 the Band competed at the North American Championship Glengarry Highland Games in Maxville, Ontario and the Montreal Highland Games, in Quebec. Their only placing was first prize in the medley contest at Montreal in 2002, although they consistently took 5th place at Maxville.

The fall of 2003 was a turning point for the band as both Pipe Majors Fraser and Stankey retired. The band sought leadership from Pipe Major Wes Sheppard, formerly of Kenora Scottish and the 78th Fraser Highlanders. By August of 2005 Pipe Major Sheppard, along with long time Drum Sergeant Bob Cooper, decided it was time to return with the St. Andrew's Society Pipe Band to the Grade 3 circle in Maxville. There the Band was awarded the Best Pipe Corps, the Best Bass Section, and the Best Drum Corps, clinching the Grade 3 North American Championship. During this time, the band incorporated under the official name The St. Andrew's Pipe Band.

The fall of 2005 saw the band make its move to Grade 2. Drum Sergeant Bob

Cooper stepped down from his position and handed the reigns of the drum corp to former Grade 1 World Champion Roland "Rolly" Reid (SFU, 78th Toronto). Along with some music changes and new leadership, the band stormed into Grade 2 in 2006, shocking everyone again in Maxville by placing 3rd at the North Americans their first year in the grade. St. Andrew's Grade 2 also got to place its name on the PPBAM Grade 2 Champion Supreme trophy for the first time in history.

2008 was another corner turning year for the band. Following another 3rd place finish in Maxville in 2007, they made their debut in the Grade 1 arena in Red Deer Alberta putting in two very good performances. Later, the band returned to the North American Championships winning the piping and again 3rd overall. The following day in Montreal, the band again won the piping and this time secured a first place finish. The band had now established itself as one of the top bands in the continent.

In 2009, lead drummer Roland Reid stepped away from the group. As well, a large portion of the drum corps left the organization. Sean Johnston, lead drummer from the Grade 3 band stepped up to fill the role. He re-built the core and midsection with much success.

As well, the bands 5th annual concert titled "One Voice" took on a whole new dimension, utilizing new talents, format and technical innovations. These annual concerts continue to wow the audience. Both bands perform individually and then as a massed band, filling the hall with powerful music. Irene Baird's School and then members of the Manitoba Highland Dancers' Association choreographed dances to complement the piping tunes. "Cantabile" was a favourite and was even performed live at the Winnipeg Scottish Festival's ScotDance Manitoba Choreography competition, where the dancers won a resounding first place. The band took these concerts to other venues as well, like Brandon and Thunderbay. Check this out: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A2nu3Z4VhvY>

The band competed again in Maxville and at the World's in Scotland in 2010 and 2011.

A Second Band....

In 2004 the organization realized a need for a competitive Grade 4 adult pipe band, not only as a stepping stone to the larger Grade 2 band, but as somewhere for Grade 2 players to cool their feet if they needed some time off. In the fall, a second band, the St. Andrew's Society Grade 4 Pipe Band was created under the leadership of Pipe Major Kirby McRae and Drum Sergeant James Hoel. The band competed in its first contest at the Winnipeg Scottish Festival in February of 2005.

In the fall of 2005 Drum Sergeant James Hoel turned the drum corp over to fellow Grade 2 member Sean Johnston. During the 2006 competition season the Grade 4 band tasted some serious success, winning several local contests and winning the the Prairie Pipe Band Association of Manitoba (PPBAM) Grade 4 Champion

Supreme award. The Band made a clean sweep of it's 2007 season, taking first place in all contests entered, including the Winnipeg Scottish Festival, Brandon Highland Festival, Moose Jaw, Regina, Selkirk, Bands on the Boardwalk, Calgary and Canmore Highland Games, and once again won the PPBAM Champion Supreme Award. The band played up to Grade 3 at several contests, and took several first place wins.

The Band's focus for 2008 was fundraising for a trip to Scotland. They stayed close to home for most of the 2008 season in order to save money, and managed to win most of the events entered. They also played up to Grade 3 whenever contest rules permitted, and took first place at each event entered. In Scotland, they competed at the Dundonald and Perth games, and in the World Pipe Band Championships. The Band placed 7th in Grade 4 and 2nd in Grade 3 at Dundonald, and won the Best Overseas Band award, placed 6th in both Grade 4 and Grade 3 at Perth, took first place in the World's qualifier and 7th overall in Grade 4B. Accommodations were in Glasgow at Glasgow Caledonian University, and they took in the week-long Piping Live festival as well as all the usual sightseeing.

In 2009, the band up-graded to Grade 3 and was rewarded by taking first place in all Grade 3 events at the Winnipeg Scottish Festival and Brandon Highland Festival. Ian Walker took over the drum corps, filling the position as Sean Johnston took over the Grade 2 drum corps. Since then, Graham Fidler, Dylan Knight and Dave Chorney have all participated in leading the drum section.

Two Rivers Juvenile

Two Rivers Juvenile Pipe Band was created as part of the St. Andrew's Society of Winnipeg Pipe Band organization to provide a fun, energetic, engaging learning environment for young people to master the arts of highland bagpipes and drums.

Boys and girls alike have many great opportunities to learn and grow both musically and personally. The opportunities include:

- Participation at pipe band and solo contests.

- Team fundraising to subsidize travel.

- Public performances at parades, concerts and festivals.

- Exposure to the adult bands within the SASPB organization, to give students a better understanding of how adult bands work and make the transition from juvenile to adult bands an easier and more enjoyable experience.

The sad fact about many juvenile pipe band members is that they often quit once they age out of a youth band. This may be due to burn-out, life changes from going to higher education or a full time job, or boredom with the pipe band world. The goal of the Two Rivers Band is to provide a clear path to transition into the adult world of pipe bands, and create a lifelong interest in the hobby, for the benefit of the members, the future continuance of our organization, and support the future growth of Scottish-Canadian music in Manitoba.

With a group of passionate instructors at the helm and band members available to help, students are engaged once a week at rehearsals as well as at contests and other performance venues. This youth band has proven to be a fantastic place to learn teamwork, professionalism, and have fun in the process.

The instructors include some of the top solo and band performers in Western Canada. They are committed to passing on the spark and passion that they enjoy through piping and drumming, to all the students.

Compiled by Janet McCombe with the help of the SASPB website:
<http://www.saspb.com/index.html>