

An abridged version of the early history of the Stirling Pipe Band. Much of the information is as written by Pipe Major W.J. MacLeod for "From the Beaches to the Falls" - a historical record of activities along the Winnipeg River from Great Falls to Victoria Beach.



The Stirling Pipe Band 1971

First Row (L-R): Bill Rodger, Bill Welsh, Hugh Peden (me), Jim Rodger, Maureen Rodger, Pipe Major Bill MacLeod

Second Row (L-R): John Bulmer, Michael Hutchison, Michael Miller, Ed Roy, Allister Rodger, Brent Pfefferle

Third Row (L-R): Laurie Keating, Tej Walia, Ken Dankowski, Adrian Farmer, Carol Bulmer, Jeff Berthelette, Tony DeLuca, Brenda Osmond

Since the days of the early settlers, the sound of Scottish Highland Bagpipes have been heard in Manitoba. In 1947, following the Second World War years, Pipe Major William MacLeod, Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada, arrived in Pine Falls, becoming the first resident piper of the town. The Pine Falls piping pupils began in September 1965 with Allister Rodger, followed by Maureen, James and William, the family of Mr. and Mrs. Ian Rodger.



Maureen, William, James and Alister Rodger.

Due to several local performances of this small group of pipers, including the reception of the Centennial Across Canada Canoe Expedition at the Pipe Falls Power development in 1967, enthusiasm for piping spread to include many other young pupils.

The resulting pipe group included Michael Miller, Michael Hutchison, Mark Hutchison, Ian Hutchison, Edmond Roy, Nadine Roy, Brent Pfefferle, Bill Welsh, Hugh Peden, Heather Peden, Barry Cyr, Susan Hayward, Maureen Rodger, Allister Rodger, Jim Rodger and William Rodger. Interest in the formation of a pipe band was further supported early on as John Bulmer began the training of a pipe band drum section under the expert tuition of Drum Major James Barrie of Winnipeg. This group of drummers included John Bulmer, Geoff Bulmer, Carol Bulmer, Adrian Farmer, Tony DeLuca, Tej Walia, Ken Dankowsky, Jeff Berthelette, Brenda Osmond, David Osmond, Kristin Pitre, Tracy Sharpe, Jackie Veilleux, Debbie Mason, Tom Bartlett, Don MacLellan and Tom Gold.



Hugh Peden, Temple Gardens, Moose Jaw, Sask. 1970

In the fall of 1968 the pipe band was formed in Pine Falls and the first committee was elected at the home of Mr. and Mrs. John Hutchison; Ian Rodger (Chairman), Evelyn Bulmer (Secretary), and Mary Hutchison (Treasurer) - the pipe band to be known as the Pine Falls Pipe Band.



The Stirling Pipe Band 1970

First Row (L-R): Michael Hutchison, Bill Welsh, Hugh Peden (me), Maureen Rodger, Bill Rodger, Jim Rodger, Alister Rodger, Pipe Major Bill MacLeod

Second Row (L-R): Ed Roy, Brenda Osmand, Carol Bulmer, John Bulmer, Tony Deluca, Jeff Berthelette, Tej Walia, Brent Pfefferle

As regular practices were held each week at the Pine Falls School and additional piping instruction sessions and drumming lessons improved the enthusiastic players, they became competent solo players as well as good band members, and soon were able to play in many parades and competitions. Funds were raised and the band was outfitted with traditional uniforms in the MacLeod of MacLeod tartan - to reflect Pipe Major MacLeod's contribution.

In 1972 the title of the Pine Falls Pipe Band was changed to Stirling Pipe Band in recognition of Ian Rodger, a native Scot from the city of Stirling. As four founding members of the band were of the Rodger family, permission was requested and granted from the Royal Burgh of Stirling, Scotland, to use their official Coat of Arms and Burgh Name.

The honours received by the Stirling Pipe Band and its members over the next 20 years brought recognition to Pine Falls. The band's record of awards, as distinct as any band in Canada at the time, could not have happened without the high standard of its players and as a result solo awards were numerous. Piping awards won by Alister and Maureen Rodger exceeded 50 awards each, Jim Rodger, Bill Rodger, Ed Roy, Bill Welsh, and Hugh Peden received many similar distinctions. Geoff Bulmer, Brenda Osmond, David Osmond, Carol Bulmer, and Jeff Berthelette were consistent winners in drumming events.

Stirling Pipe Band Places 4th

"Stirling Pipe Band Gains Dominion and Provincial Honors". Saturday, June 29th, 1974, at Ottawa, Ontario, the location of a National Competition, Stirling Pipe Band placed in runners-up position for Canadian Inter-Provincial Pipe Bands - also placed fourth in Canadian Open Pipe Band Competition - a very rewarding experience for this group from Pine Falls. Also a young Band member, Hugh Peden, placed third in Solo Juvenile Piping Competition. These events are considered top honors for the Dominion - attended by forty-eight Pipe Bands across Canada - and a spectator attendance in excess of twenty thousand.

On Monday, July 1st, this fine group of players attended the Scottish Amateur Athletic Association Highland Gathering at Pan-Am Stadium, University of Manitoba winning the following awards:

Solo Piping: Allister Rodger third place winner (three events) open piping class. Jim Rodger third place winner junior solo piping.

Pipe Band Competition: Stirling Pipe Band 1st place Grade 2 United Scottish Event. Stirling Pipe Band 1st place Grade 2 Manitoba Pipe Band Championship, "Army Navy & Air Force Veterans Trophy".

Pine Falls Pipers Win

PINE FALLS, MAN. (Special) — Members of the Stirling Pipe Band, Pine Falls, won several awards at three competitions. The competitions were held by the Scottish Amateur Athletic Association at the University of Manitoba July 3, the Manitoba highland dancers association at the St. James-Assiniboia Civic Centre, July 10; the Selkirk Highland Gathering Inc. at Selkirk, July 11.

The winners of the solo awards for piping were; Allister Rodger, who won two trophies, four gold medals, six silver medals and one bronze medal; Maureen Rodger, who won one trophy, four gold medals, and eight silver medals; James Rodger, who won one gold medal, four silver medals and two bronze medals; William Rodger, who won one trophy, two gold medals and two silver medals. Tom Gold won a silver medal for drumming.

As the original members of the band grew up, many relocated to the Winnipeg area. For many more years, Pipe Major MacLeod ran the Stirling Pipe Band out of Winnipeg - commuting from Pine Falls for practices - all the while gaining new members from the city. For a time, the band amalgamated with the Centennial Pipe Band of Winnipeg and were known as the Stirling/Centennial Pipe Band. During this time, the band won Grade 1 honours in Manitoba competitions for several consecutive years.

As a natural addition to the band, several local girls started to take Highland Dance lessons and over the next several years performed with the band on many different occasions. Organized by Irene Peden, the dancers included Heather and Audrey Peden, Colleen Coote, Moira Geer and others. Dance teachers were brought in from Winnipeg and included Delma Wilson and Malyss Gibbon.





Bill MacLeod and Hugh Peden, 1970, Pine Falls, Manitoba - receiving another pipe lesson from a master.



Bill MacLeod and Hugh Peden, July 1992, Winnipeg, Manitoba





Band Reunion - August 3rd, 2002, Pine Falls, Manitoba

On August, 2002, the [Stirling Pipe Band held a Reunion](#) to coincide with the celebration of Pine Falls 75th Anniversary. After meeting in the Village Green the Band performed at a number of different locations throughout the weekend.

Pipe Major W.J. MacLeod, now in his late 80's, continues to pipe and teach local children in Pine Falls almost 40 years since he first started tutoring his pupils in Pine Falls. His piping skills, work with the youth of Pine Falls, and service to the country in which he became Pipe Major of the Queens Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada and served through out the liberation of Holland, has been recognized in many ways over that time, including a Good Citizenship Award presented by the Lt. Governor of Manitoba.



HEADQUARTERS COMPANY
Headquarters

*Front Row—Sgt.-Major J. E. Mavins, Lieut. J. T. Aitken, Capt. R. Shankland, V.C., D.C.M., Lieut. W. Goodall, C.Q.M.S. A. Nicolson.
Back Row—Pte. E. Atha, Pte. E. A. Trotter, Pte. G. Bostrom, Pte. W. J. McLeod.*

Queens Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada - Headquarters Company - 1939. Pte. W.J. MacLeod in back right with bagpipes.



47th Piping School, Edinburgh Castle 1943-1944 being led by Pipe Major Wm. Ross. Left to right: L/Cpl Duncan Lamont - Argyle & Sutherland Highlanders, Pipe Major Donald MacLeod - Seaforth Highlanders, Pipe Major W.J. MacLeod - Queens Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada.

In July 1996, Bill MacLeod presented the following pipe tune to me - titled "[Hughie Peden](#)" it was written by Bill in recognition of our many memories together in piping. I have been piping since 1969 when I first picked up a practice chanter. My success, and to a large degree my enjoyment of piping, has come as a result of the tutelage provided to me, free of charge, from Bill MacLeod. In recent years my success with the [Vancouver Police Pipe Band](#) and more recently as Pipe Major of the [RCMP E Division Pipe Band](#) - can be attributed to Bill. I am proud of that fact and am happy let everyone know it. In June 2008, Bill passed away just shy of his 94th birthday. His memorial service was held in Pine Falls on a beautiful sunny day only a few hundred feet away from the school gymnasium that we used to practice with him each Monday night. I

have posted a copy of the Eulogy here as way to remember the many things Bill did for us as kids in that small town of Pine Falls, Manitoba.