

## **The Piobaireachd Legacy of Donald MacLeod      Andrew Wright**

Chair      Dugald MacNeill

Andrew Wright needs no introduction to the Piobaireachd Society. He has been a member of the Society for many years and was the President before Jack.

A feature of this Society has been that only a few of the professional pipers who wanted to play in competition have been members for various reasons. Sadly I suspect that they are not sufficiently interested in the music although they will practice the set tunes and play them pretty well.

Now Andrew Wright does not belong to that class of competitor. He has proved to be a consistent prize-winner but is also very interested in the music. He has studied it, and of course he has been teaching for many years.

He was born in Govan. Now if your parents thought you were going to be a piper Govan was the place to be born because Govan was really far more important than Lewis or Skye or anywhere else in the last 100 years because there was more good piping played and composed in Govan than probably anywhere else in the world. So he was in the right place although he defected to Paisley.

Andrew is an engineer and being an engineer he has got a lot of logic in his thinking. He was always keen to go to the best teacher and he has probably had more experience of the most famous teachers in the last 40 years than any of us. One of the great things was that, not that long ago, Wee Donald MacLeod retired from his army service to live in Glasgow and so although he had teaching from Peter MacLeod and Peter MacLeod junior he wasn't going to stick with that. He went to all the good teachers he could go to. So he is pretty well aware of all the different teachers and different methods of teaching.

I didn't know Peter MacLeod Senior or Junior very well but I used to see them on a Saturday night just at the end of the war in the SPA room in the Highlander's Institute in Elmbank Street in Glasgow. Old Peter walked about with a stick, he had a bit of a wooden leg, but young Peter would march up and down and play 2/4 marches that he had composed that week. He was an amazing guy.

But Andrew's talk today is about Donald MacLeod and of course he was a wonderful teacher. I remember that Wee Donald was employed by this Society to teach in Glasgow the tunes that were set that year. Angus MacLellan and I were the only two who were there in the evenings. It was one of the best weeks of my life in piping terms because he was a charming man and so I'm really looking forward to hearing Andrew's account of his long association with Wee Donald MacLeod.