

played you can see what they mean. Donald MacPherson (with whom I had about a dozen lessons over a period of three months or so when I was down in Glasgow in the early Seventies) once said to me that people who affected a genuine interest in piobaireachd—you know the kind of thing: 'oh, I do love the pibroch', were 'nutters'. So there you go; golden Donald. How many clasps, nine?

So here was a kind of paradox, if you like. On the one hand everybody played from the Piobaireachd Society volumes (and Kilberry; I didn't have a copy of the latter myself—Bob Nicol was vehement in his condemnation of it, said his teacher Johnny MacDonald wouldn't have a copy of it in his house). You thought, 'well, these are summative; they contain a distillation of the wisdom of the ages; armed with these you need nothing else.' And yet, time and again the older collections, Ross, MacPhee, Glen, Thomason, said something different, represented the tunes in what seemed a more sweet and recognisably musical way. So what was going on?

X I eventually found out when I decided to write a book I had long planned about the pipe and its music. I had written books before on literary and historical subjects, some of them won or were to win prizes (Blackwell Prize for *Popular Literature in Victorian Scotland*, Scottish Arts Council Book Award for *The Jacobite Song*, while *The Highland Pipe and Scottish Society* was to become joint first for the Saltire Society's Research Book of the Year), so I thought I knew how to do it. There was no adequate existing history, so it was obviously important to get inside the Piobaireachd Society and have a look at what had happened. So I had to get permission to view the papers of the Society held in the National Library of Scotland. It was an unusual case. Very occasionally the Library would take into its care for the public good collections of papers with restricted access to them, i.e. papers whose owners had to give written permission before the library would produce them for your perusal (in the belief that it was better the papers should be looked after properly at the public expense, even if not everybody could get to see them). So I wrote to Seumas MacNeill, who as Secretary of the Society had the say-so about who could see the papers and who couldn't, and he didn't reply. So I wrote again. About three months later he wrote flatly refusing permission. Apparently there was private correspondence mixed up with the Society's administrative papers, minutes, accounts and such (and indeed there was, as I was later to discover, some of it strongly critical of Seumas MacNeill). So I sat down and waited till he died. And when he did, I wrote to his successor who granted the required permission. The papers are extensive, and present an interesting picture of the Society. It is as well I was able to see them: the view of the Society and its activities that emerged would have been a good deal more negative if I had been forced to compile it from external sources like the *Oban Times* alone.

So that showed the history of the Piobaireachd Society's publishing of the scores; and something emerged quite clearly at an early stage, namely that although the volumes were published in the name of the Music Committee, they had no input into published results, no oversight during the editorial process, may not even have seen the books issued in their name before they hit the streets. Archibald Campbell worked alone. He was sole editor of volumes 2-9 of the Piobaireachd Society's Collection containing the heart of the competition repertoire.