

JOE KING

The jig written for Joe by Alex MacIver is not for the faint hearted or the feeble of finger. It is a technical reminder that if you have not been keeping your hand in, then it is high time you were.

Moir Livingston, Joe's daughter, has kindly written for us the following about her father:-

Joe King was born in Whiteinch in 1920 and lived there until his family moved to Scotstounhill in 1933. He joined the 214 GCBB in Gordon Park Church where, with tuition from Alex Ibell, he learned to play the pipes, later playing in the company pipe band along with Alex MacIver.

After serving his apprenticeship as a sheet metal worker in Meechans Iron Works, Scotstoun, which had its own pipe band, he worked during the war in the Blackburn Aircraft factory in Dumbarton alongside his former tutor, Alex Ibell. After the war he joined Rolls-Royce in Hillington where he worked until he retired. On leaving the 214 GCBB Joe joined the Rutherglen Pipe Band under Pipe Major Jimmie Baxter and then the Renfrew Pipe Band under Pipe Major Cragie Calder. Donald Murray later became Pipe Major and when he was working away from Glasgow on sea trials, Joe was acting Pipe Major. During this time, the Renfrew Pipe Band was seldom out of the Grade 1 prize list.

Joe's involvement with the 214 GCBB continued for many years along with the two "Alexs" and Dan Finlay, helping to teach the boys and set up the band until the company ceased. For many years, at the BB Annual Inspection, Joe was the Pipe Major of the Ex-Members Pipe Band, a fine band comprising mainly Grade 1 players.

His interest in piping remained and he was a stalwart of the Veterans Club held weekly in the College of Piping.

Joe died on 30th of March 1992.



Joe is seen here wearing his Renfrew uniform.

Joe's tune challenged the very basis of the Sibelius music writing program proving to be the most difficult of all of Alex's tunes to type set. It had all the functions going at full tilt, Flip, Fractional Beam, Reset Note Spacing, Shrink Bar to Fit Contents, Reset Beam Groups, to name but a few! However, for Joe it was worth all the effort!



Joe with John Finlay and Hector Russell in 1966.



Joe was a winner of The College of Piping's Veterans Cup, and is shown above proudly holding the trophy. He was a pupil of Alex Ibell as was Alex MacIver. All three had strong links to The Rutherglen Pipe Band and particularly to their redoubtable Pipe Major, Jimmy Baxter.

The connection between the 214 and The Rutherglen lasted for many years from well before the Second World War. Countless ex-214 members have played with The Rutherglen.

Joe was the maestro of tone and was blessed with a magic touch. He would lean forward, hand cupped behind his ear, teeth bared as if absorbing an offending screech. Swiftly and expertly he would spring to remove the chanter, gently tweak the offending reed and placing it in his lips, blow it with what seemed his trade mark vibrato and, as if by magic, all was well!

To be greeted by Joe with his catchphrases "STICKING OUT!" and "OUT THE PARK" as the band returned from the competition field was all that the boys of the band needed to hear.

Some of Joe's pupils had the great good fortune to play his pipes, shown below, in solo competition. This was an immaculately maintained instrument in both appearance, but more importantly a bagpipe with a superb sound; to us they were the piping equivalent of a Stradivarius.

Ian McLellan has written confirming:-

"Regarding the photograph of Joe's pipes, please add to the script that I played Joe's pipes when I competed and won the top light music awards at the Argyllshire Gatherings in Oban and at the Northern Meetings in Inverness".

Joe's tune is dated on the original manuscript as 31st December 1969.



JOE KING's pipes