

## **THE TWO ALEXS**

### **214th Glasgow Company of The Boys' Brigade**



### **Alex MacIver    Alex Ibell**

**World, Scottish, British and Cowal Champions 1960.**

**Trophies other than those mentioned above won in 1960 are also shown. These include first place in all juvenile drumming events that year and first place band prizes at other competitions including Rothesay, the S.P.B.A. Branch and The Highland Shield. The other prizes shown are where the band either won or were on the prize list when playing "up" in Grades two and three. This iconic image shows Alex Ibell and his pupil Alex MacIver with the fruits of their endeavour. However, it was not these trophies which were their legacies, but the bandsmen they nurtured who were always encouraged to be the best they could be.**

**Band members in 1960 are shown Left to Right**

**BACK ROW**

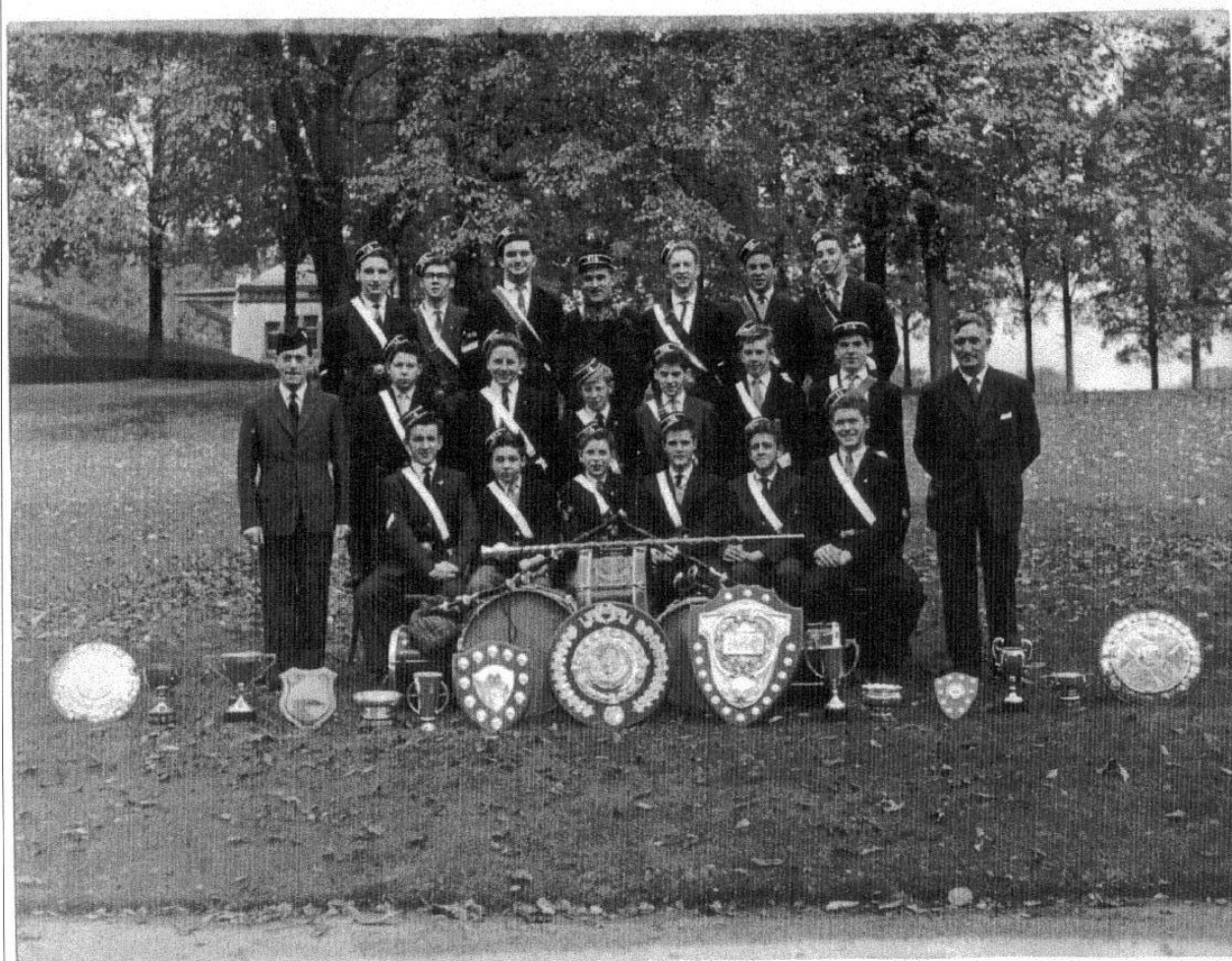
**A.RAE R.TURNER G.LOWE D.LAW J.MILLAR A.LONGWELL E.THOMSON**

**SECOND ROW**

**P.M. ALEX MACIVER H.RUSSELL D.ELMSLIE W,LAW T.GRINLEY S. HUNTER C.GRINLAY ALEX F. IBELL**

**FRONT ROW**

**G.FERGUSON A.McGREGOR T.CALLAGHAN M.McKENZIE J. MARSHALL J.MACDOUGALL**



**The image of the Two Alexs was the catalyst to include a personal “blog” from Archie Maclean from a later generation of the band (see the group photo for 1964 shown below).**

**Archie said:**

**” I owe Alex MacIver and the 214 BB a huge debt of gratitude. They taught me the importance of musicianship, commitment, preparation, organisation and camaraderie. Alex’s influence, especially his emphasis on MUSIC, is something I have never forgotten throughout my piping life as a competitor, adjudicator and schools examiner.**

**PS. I play “Alex MacIver” along with “Alex F Ibell” as a mini-set entitled “The 214 Two Alexs”.”**

6/8 March

## Alex F. Ibell

Alex M. MacIver



Alex MacIver

March

Composed by Archie Maclean



Archie Maclean was initially taught his piping by his father, Pipe Major John Maclean (North Uist) who was a former Pipe Sergeant 1<sup>st</sup> Btn. Scots Guards, and later Pipe Major 2<sup>nd</sup> Btn. H.L.I. John was a well-known piping adjudicator- both solo (piobaireachd and light music) and band for the R.S.P.B.A.





**John Maclean, about 1955, and his son Archie, about 1994. Same kilt, same pipes! Archie advises that he is, in addition, wearing his father's Glengarry, an old WW2 HLI bonnet and cap badge. Recycling going well in Inverness!**

**Archie was brought up in a Gaelic-speaking household as was Alex MacIver. He keeps in touch with his North Uist background, returning to their family croft annually on holiday. His father sent him in the first instance to Peter MacFarquhar for tuition and when Peter returned to Skye Archie was taken down to the 214 in 1963 to be tutored by Alex MacIver. John Maclean knew Alex well and how good the 214 was, and he wanted his son to be taught by the best! The Macleans lived in Langside on the South side of Glasgow and Archie travelled sometimes four times a week to Gordon Park. Membership of the 214 required commitment and stamina! Archie left the 214 in 1967 as band sergeant. Meantime his piping tuition had continued where he was taught piobaireachd by his father's friend, fellow ex-Scots Guardsman and piping adjudicator Peter Bain (Skye).**

**Archie was a student at Glasgow School of Art for five years, followed by a year at Jordanhill College, and began his teaching career in Glasgow in 1973. He joined The Clan MacRae in 1972 which was led, at that time, by ex-214 old boy John Finlay, winning the Grade Two World Championship at Ayr in 1973. The MacRae disbanded and amalgamated with the Rolls Royce band, and Archie moved to Inverness to take up a teaching post in 1975. There he continued to study piobaireachd with Neil Angus Macdonald of Barra, (the piper in "Whisky Galore") who was a pupil of piobaireachd master John Macdonald of Inverness.**

**He also received tuition in Ceol Mor with Willie “Muc” MacDonald of Benbecula. There followed between 1976 and the early 1990s a period where Archie had a sporadic but fairly successful solo competing career in piobaireachd and light music.**

**Archie has been President of the Inverness Piping Society on three occasions - it is the oldest piping society in existence. From 1989 – 2004 he was Principal Teacher of Art at Dingwall Academy. Now retired, Archie has been for the past 10 years a listed solo piping adjudicator in both piobaireachd and light music. He is a Scottish Qualifications Authority music examiner (bagpipes), assessing candidates in schools throughout Scotland. He has judged solo piping at North Uist games on several occasions and he has donated piping trophies there in memory of his father and mother. He tells us that the first ever winner of the trophy in 1987, in his father’s name, was Roddy MacLeod, now Principal of The National Piping Centre. The trophy is seen being presented by Kate Ann (Maclean) MacDonald, Archie’s aunt. In the background is a young bearded Alan MacDonald (Glenuig).**





**In this second image, extreme right with his back turned, is Fred Morrison. Both Alan and Fred would, in subsequent years be winners of the trophy.**



# THE BAND OF 1964



**Band members shown are:**

**Standing L to R:**

**Tom Yeoman, Dougie Elmslie, Finlay Drynnan, Gordon Medlow, Davie Scott (leading tip), Donnie Glass, Eddie Thomson (bass), David McGaffin, Alistair Ross, Kenneth Cape, Ronnie Elmslie, Tom Callaghan, Rab Wallace.**

**Sitting L to R:**

**Matthew Recht, John Buchanan (side drummer), Archie Maclean, Dan Finlay, Alex MacIver, Alex Ibell, Alastair Osborne, Brian May (tenor), Hugh Fulton (tenor), Willie Law.**

**David McGaffin is the “man without portfolio” House Officer at The Trades House. When Joe Noble was arranging his daughter’s wedding at the “House” he was met by David who announced to Joe that he had followed his career with great interest having once himself been a tenor drummer in the 214!**



**Eddie Thomson took over Bass Duties from “big” Gordon Lowe who succeeded Dougie Law. Dan Finlay relates a tale about Eddie Thomson (a resident of Northinch St.). It seems that Eddie had been reported missing from normal band and company nights and the “Two Alexs” went to his home to be met by Eddie’s mother. Responding to enquiries as to her son’s whereabouts, her reply was that not only did she not know he was a big drummer, but that she did not know he was in the BB!**

**Archie Maclean’s piping story is typical of many 214 boys who have gone on as a result of the influence on their lives by Alex MacIver, Alex Ibell, Joe King, Dan Finlay and company officers of the 214 to make a fine contribution to piping and to the pipe band movement and, indeed, to their communities generally. Their mentors not least the “Two Alexs” would rightly be very proud of them.**



**ALEX MacIVER**

**ALEX IBELL**