

# **BELFAST THE MOVIE**

**22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1962**

## **A SAGA OF SEAFARING FOLK.**

**For the boys of The 214 Glasgow Company of The Boys' Brigade, based at Gordon Park Church in Whiteinch, nautical excursions were not unusual. Many would travel regularly by The Govan, Renfrew, and Whiteinch Ferries as a matter of course. These fine fellows were, after all, Clydesiders used to crossing the river and, as the name indicates, Whiteinch was originally an island. The chapter "Whiteinch" covers this and other important local facts like how Partick Thistle had twice been residents of the same locality as the 214. The boys of Gordon Park also enjoyed much longer annual seafaring outings to the highland games at Rothesay and Dunoon and, perchance, even a trip "doon the watter" for "The Glasgow Fair".**



**The Whiteinch Ferry in 1955.**

**For more nautical high jinks see the Chapter "The Whiteinch Crossing".**

**The trip, or rather the voyage, to Belfast in 1962 was to compete at The World Pipe Band Championships. This was the second time that Belfast had hosted this event, the previous occasion being 1956. That previous World's was the first time that the premier pipe band contest had been held outwith Scotland. The long trip to Belfast held no fears for the intrepid travellers from Gordon Park. Off they went on the Friday night to set sail from Ardrossan to the Emerald Isle. This was an overnight crossing which was not without incident. One reporter recalls that the vessel had to head for Belfast changing up to "full speed ahead" because either a passenger had been taken ill or there was a man overboard. The latter seems the more unlikely as the loss overboard, even of a judge, would not see the ship speed away from the scene!**

**The three images below include most of those representing the 214 in Belfast in 1962.**



**L/R John MacDougall, Malcolm MacKenzie, Tommy (Jnr) Callaghan, Hector Russell, Gordon Ferguson, and Ally McGregor.**

**2<sup>nd</sup> row: Dougie Elmslie, Stuart Hunter, Jim Marshall. Back row: Gordon Lowe and Eddie Thompson.**

**A small, shy Gordon Medlow was also part of the 1962 team in Belfast.**



**L/R Gordon Lowe, Jackie Millar, Archie Longwell, Robert Turner and Eddie Thompson.**



**Winners of The Highland Shield May 1962: L/R: John MacDougall, Dougie Elmslie, Tommy Grindlay, Malcolm MacKenzie, Eddie Thompson, Jim Marshall, Archie Longwell, Hector Russell and Gordon Ferguson. The Highland Shield image shows the 214 in their No.1 kit as worn in Belfast. Their No.2 kit was when they had to add raincoats and that was the order of much of the day on that Saturday in June. The kilts and tunics worn in the top two images were acquired for the filming of a Walls Ice Cream advert in Kelvingrove Park.**

**The return journey from Belfast on the Saturday night was to prove much more of a problem than the outward leg. Inclement weather was to prevent the ship sailing at its intended time of departure.**

**Some repaired to their bunks and would rise from their slumber expecting to have returned to “Auld Scotia” only to be disappointed. They found themselves still in Belfast. Not only that but provisions on board were exhausted as a result of the delays and poor forward planning by the ship’s catering staff. This was to present P.M. Alex MacIver with an issue of mammoth proportions as his charges, as the saying goes, could “go their chuck”. Little did we know that a different kind of “chuck” was soon to be in much evidence! And so it came to pass that MacIver did what years of military service and training (which saw him rise to the rank of Captain) had taught him. He delegated the problem! Gordon Medlow’s father Malky was appointed to head an elite team including Dan Finlay and Neilly MacLellan, Ian’s dad, to solve the dilemma.**

**Gordon’s father Malky Medlow, seen below, was a popular and resourceful fellow and a great supporter of the 214, not least when his son Gordon was a piper in the band. He was, as mentioned above, Heid Cook and Bottle Washer in charge of food procurement and catering for the extended stay on the Belfast excursion in 1962, speciality corned beef! Malky was, as were many of the Medlow family, time-served members of the 214.**



### **Malky Medlow**

**Hugh McKinlay, probably our oldest serving ex-member, was as a boy a contemporary of Alex MacIver both at school and in the 214. He also served in the same regiment with him in the army during the war. Hugh wrote in 1992:**

**“At the annual inspection of the 214 BB in the 30s the prize list was dominated by the Medlow family. So much so that it was often commented in 214 circles that Ma and Pa Medlow always brought along a barrow to take home the family trophies!”**

**Gordon tells us that these were the bedtime stories he had to make do with as a child. This may well explain his sense of humour!**





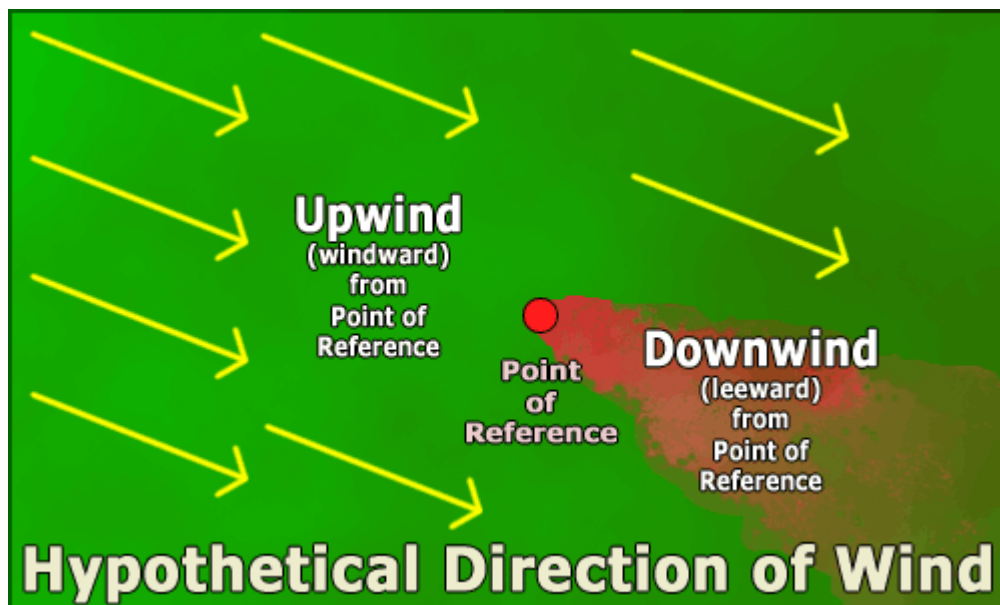
**Ian MacLellan with his dad Neilly.**

**Ian's father Neilly was a colleague of Alex Ibell and Joe King working at The Blackburn Aircraft Factory in Dumbarton. The family were from Clydebank and as a result of wartime evacuation found themselves resident for the war years and sometime after with relatives on their farm at Shandon, past Rhu. Ian recalls a weekend visit they had from Alex Ibell on his bike when he delivered for him an Alex-Ibell-manufactured practice chanter and a "Logan's Tutor". That was the beginning of the piping adventures and notable successes of Pipe Major Ian MacLellan B.E.M. of Strathclyde Police Pipe Band. Neilly was a stalwart supporter of the band of the 214 during Ian's BB career and for many years thereafter when Ian played with The Renfrew and then "The Polis".**

**At sunrise on Sunday the hit squad of Medlow, MacLellan and Finlay were dispatched into a very quiet deepest Belfast and on its return welcomed back with eager anticipation. They brought with them many loaves, but no fishes. Instead there were industrial-sized cans of corned beef!**

**What would subsequently emerge was a mountain of corned beef sandwiches probably best described as "doorstops". This gastronomic extravaganza was constructed with the aid of the only working tools available: two sgian dubhs. Implements such as these are excellent for many tasks such as taking stones out of horse's hoofs or teasing an errant drone reed, but slicing and buttering loaves and corned beef? Well? Never the less for those of us for whom a Fine Dining Experience was when the toast was cut diagonally, or we were regaled with an extra pan of fritters of a weekend, even perchance a piece 'n' dripping, this onboard feast was devoured with gusto.**

And so the SAGA continued. The ship departed on what was we recall a fine calm sunny day. However, we were no sooner sailing away from the shelter of the loch than we discovered the hard way why our return trip had been delayed. Waves which seemed to be as high as the top of the ship's masts tossed the ferry incessantly. What was to follow was an inevitable epidemic of Mal de Mer, which was, to continue the French allusion, Le Grande Chuck! Many of our number were to learn too late the difference between windward and leeward. This knowledge had not been necessary for trips on The Whiteinch Ferry!



In our case there were many cases of projectile vomiting and basically if you had not been ill it was only a matter of time before you would be!

John MacDougall was Staff Sergeant in 1962 at the Belfast event and he offers the following recollection of events:

*"As memory would have it, I was one of the lucky ones fairly unaffected by the rather dreadful conditions aboard the ferry as it ploughed its way across the Irish Sea and was held off Ardrossan for some hours.*

*Early in the morning I was wandering around the top deck checking for strays, when I saw Rab Turner at the railing. Enjoying the fresh air after being below, I approached and greeted him. He turned towards me. However, it was not a greeting which left his lips, but a jetstream of stomach contents!*

*The quantity and fragrance were so impressive I felt an urgent desire to emulate Rab's performance well up in me so I took position at the rail and we both communed with the waves.*

*It was a rather sorry-looking lot of bandsmen who disembarked later in the morning, though our stalwart adults were unmoved by the experience."*



**John McDougall**



**Robert Turner**

**No animals or children were harmed, (well if they were it was only temporarily) in the making of this film.**

**Oh, and by the way, or “incidentally” as they say in Embra, the results of the World juvenile Championships 1962 and 1956 were:**



## World Championship 1962

The World Pipe Band Championship was held in Belfast on Saturday, 23rd of June. This is the second time the competition has been held there, and in fact Belfast is the only venue outside of Scotland that has ever been chosen. Once again the enthusiasm of the Irish pipers was very much in evidence and a large crowd of about twenty thousand spectators gathered for the event.

A contingent numbering over a thousand travelled over from Scotland on the Friday evening in a specially chartered boat. Although the weather could have been better and the temperature was a bit low for comfortable playing, the elements did little to subdue the high spirits of the many enthusiasts present.

The premier event was closely contested and resulted in a win—the first time ever—for the 277th (A & S.H.) Field Regiment, R.A. This band, better known perhaps by its former name of the 402, tied with the Edinburgh City Police at 89 points but received the News of the World Cup and £75, due to their superior piping. Winning Pipe-Major John C. Weatherston is a partner in R. G. Hardie, Ltd.

Third place went to Renfrew Pipe Band, with 87½ points; fourth were Red Hackle, with 87 points; and fifth Clan MacRae, with 86½ points. The Drumming Championship was won by Shotts and Dykehead.

The result shows the changing fortunes in the pipe band world because neither the holders, Muirhead & Sons, nor the previous winners, Shotts and Dykehead, were in the first five places. All credit is due to the winning bands for the effort, concentration and many months of hard work which went into the preparations for their victories.

The Grade II Championship was won by Patna and District with 86½ points, followed by the local band, 29th Old Boys, with 84½ points, and the N. C. R. with 84½ points. Other results were:

Grade III—1st, Tullylagan; 2nd, Upper Crossgare; 3rd, Ballynahinch.

Juvenile Championship—1st, 214th Boys' Brigade; 2nd, 1st Port Glasgow Boys' Brigade; 3rd, Knightswood Juveniles.

Juvenile Drumming Championship—1st, 214th Boys' Brigade.

Novice Championship confined to Northern Ireland—1st, Down Patrick's Hospitals; 2nd, Dr. Wright Memorial; 3rd, Field-Marshal Montgomery.

Competition for Brian Boru bands—1st, Emerald Isle; 2nd, Ballygowan.

The judges in the competitions were Pipe-Majors Peter Bain, Nicol MacCallum, John MacLean and Duncan Cameron; and for drumming, J. Marr and W. Duguid.

A total of 79 bands competed, including 33 from Scotland. All three juvenile bands were from the West of Scotland, and 12 of the 14 Grade I bands were from Scotland. The Irish bands however gave a very good account of themselves, especially in the Grade II and Grade III competitions.

# Games Results

## WORLD PIPE BAND CHAMPIONSHIP—BELFAST 1956

### "NEWS OF THE WORLD TROPHY".

#### GRADE 1.

1. Muirhead and Sons, Grangemouth. P/M. J. Smith—89½ pts.
2. Renfrew. P/M. T. Shearer—89½ pts.
3. Shotts and Dykehead Caledonian. P/M. J. M'Allister—88½ pts.
4. Clan MacRae (Glasgow). P/M. A. MacLeod—88 pts.

#### GRADE 2.

1. 402 Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, Light Regiment.  
P/M. J. Weatherston.
2. Culleybackey. P/M. A. Penny.
3. Anchor Mills, Paisley. P/M. R. Purdie.

#### GRADE 3.

1. Ayr. P/M. R. MacCroskie.
2. Fallin Colliery, Stirling. P/M. J. Kerr.
3. Robert Armstrong Memorial, Belfast. P/M. T. Geddes.

#### DRUMMING CHAMPIONSHIP (Grade 3.)

Craigneuk Parish Church, Wishaw. P/M. J. Dundas.

#### NOVICE.

1. Thomas Davis Memorial, Newry. P/M. A. Fitzpatrick.
2. Legacurry, Co. Down. P/M. J. MacAdam.
3. Ballindrum, Londonderry. P/M. O. Taylor.

#### DRUMMING—Davis Memorial.

#### WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP.

1. Emerald Girls (Dublin). Miss Joan Lynch.
2. MacLean, Dundee. Mrs. Rita Stewart.
3. Caledonian Ladies (Glasgow). Miss Anne Stevenson.

#### DRUMMING—Emerald Girls and MacLean tied with 19½ points.

#### JUVENILES.

1. Lochore and District, Fife. P/M. H. MacPherson.
2. 214th Glasgow Company Boys' Brigade. P/M. A. MacIver.
3. Hawick Boys' Brigade. P/M. R. Short.

#### DRUMMING—Lochore and District, Fife.

**1956 was Ian McLellan's first season with Renfrew. Other 214 men playing with Renfrew at that time included Alex Clapperton, George Hunter, Bobby Lavery and Ronnie Kinloch.**

**Most of those playing for the 214 at Belfast in 1956 will be seen in the two images below.**



**Back: Charlie Grinley, Gordon Ferguson and Alex Rae.**

**Middle: PM Alex MacIver, Andy Hosie, Joe Noble, Robin Hunter, Dougie Law, George Robertson and Alex Ibell.**

**Front: Ian MacLellan, Hughie Davidson, Jimmy Wright, Lawson Callaghan, Jim Hamilton, Frank Hopson, Gordon McIntyre, Rab Wallace and Robert Little.**





**Highland Shield winners in 1955**

**Back: George Robertson, Andy Hosie, Robin Hunter and Jimmy Paterson.**

**Middle: Ian MacLellan, Robert Little, Jimmy Wright, George Seymour,  
Rab Wallace, Hughie Davidson, Ronnie Kinloch.**

**Front: PM Alex MacIver and Alex Ibell.**