

CAPTAIN ANGUS K.H.M.McBAIN

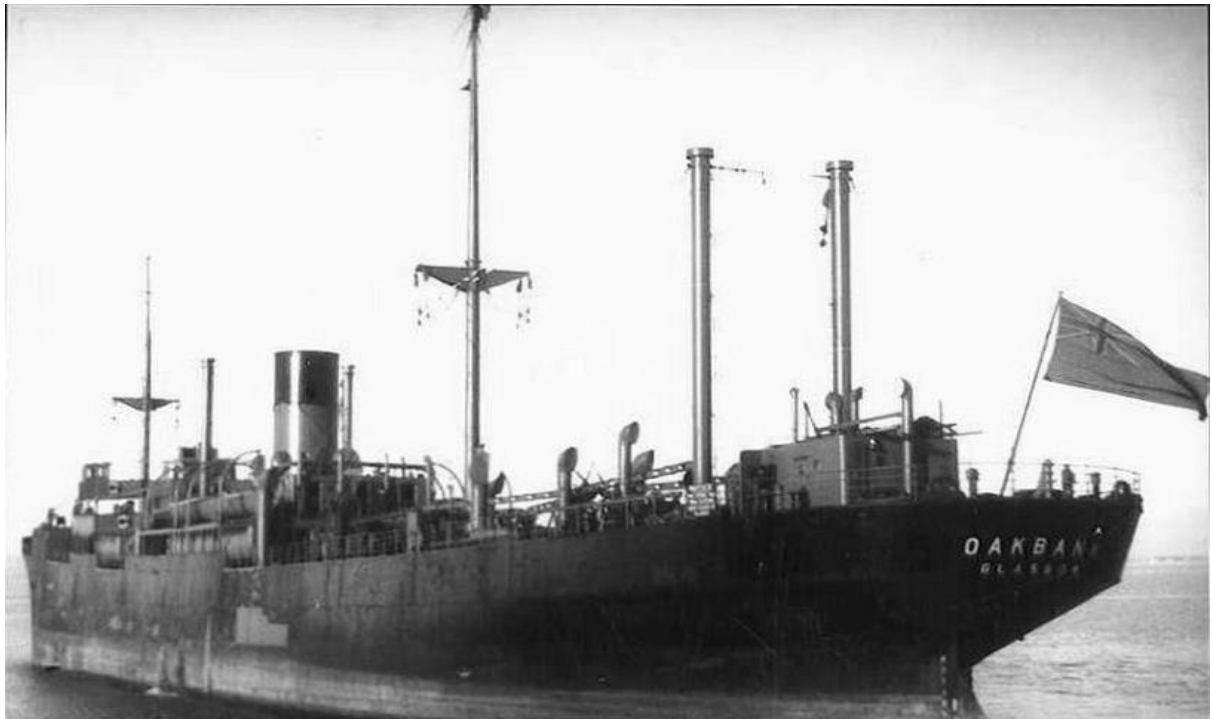
This was one of the first of Alex MacIver's scores which was acquired from the brothers Douglas and Jim Elmslie and early reactions that Angus had been, as Alex was, a Captain in the military were soon discounted. There were some suggestions that Angus was a seafaring man but no one was in a position to confirm this with any conviction.

Gordon Ferguson, our 214 colleague in Australia, was able to assure us that not only was the good Captain a nautical man but that they met several times down under. Gordon recalls that he first met *Angus Kenneth Hugh MacDonald MacBain* in Newcastle NSW in 1970. He was the captain of the "Oakbank", sailing regularly from the U.K. to OZ. While in conversation with Angus the name Alex MacIver came up and by coincidence Alex and Angus knew each other well. They had a mutual Gaelic and island heritage and so the link was made. When in port Angus would attend practice meetings of the Adamstown RSL Pipe Band (Returned Servicemen's League is the Australian equivalent of The British Legion) where Gordon was at the time Pipe Major. He remembers on one occasion being invited to have a tune or two on The Oakbank which was docked in Newcastle and taking Angus for an Aussie BBQ with a few of the lads. Gordon was able confirm that although Angus was not a piper he had a great fondness for pipe music and could play lots of pipe tunes on his little squeeze box.

There is information that Angus started his sailing career on SS Cara (Glasgow) on the timber run to the Baltic in 1950. Prior to his nautical career Angus was a driver on the Glasgow trams and might well have trundled past Gordon Park Church.

He attended Navigation School in Glasgow securing his Masters ticket. It appears Angus was on MV Southbank when it was shipwrecked on Washington Island on 26th of December 1964.

There are two Oakbanks traced and shown below, the more modern of them was Angus's ship.



The Glasgow tram shown beneath (after Angus's time as a tram driver) is approaching Otago Street where The College of Piping is situated. We are looking across Kelvin Bridge. Not far behind the tram and to the left is North Woodside Rd. where in October 1883 The Boys Brigade was founded by William Alexander Smith. William Smith was an officer in the 1st Lanark Rifle Volunteers and a teacher in the North Woodside Mission Sunday School in North Woodside Road when he founded what became the 1st Glasgow Company of The Boys Brigade. His objective was to teach boys discipline as well as religion. To this end he introduced activities familiar to the Volunteer Regiments, Military Drill, Sport, Camps and Military Bands.



Gordon tells us that Captain Angus would spend ages with Alex MacIver and that Alex told him that the Captain had a heart attack and retired from the sea. He built a house not far from Spean Bridge with views of Ben Nevis where he lived with his wife and his daughter. Gordon visited them in the early 70's but Angus did not last long after his health problems and died about 1974. Gordon commented, "Angus was one of those people who cross your path briefly but leave a lasting impression with regrets that you did not have the opportunity to know them better".

From the original manuscript of this tune in Alex's own hand the date is shown as 28th of June 1971.



Watching and listening intently at the right side of this photograph is the revered Alex F, Ibell. Gordon Ferguson is posing mischievously on the left of the picture next to Jim Marshall then Alasdair McGregor. Sadly both Jim and Ally have passed away. In the middle is “big” big drummer Gordon Lowe with Malcolm McKenzie having his pipes tuned by P.M. Alex Maclver. Alex is in business attire with his Crombie coat and Homburg hat. This was the occasion where the television advert was being filmed featuring the 214 Boys Brigade band leading a parade culminating in them all descending on an ice cream establishment seeking “sliders” and “pokey hats” and probably IRN BRU ! The venue is Kelvingrove Park. This advert would feature on ITV for many months and was rerun several times in the following years.

Reports have it that the film director of the advert was impatient to complete his project and insisted that Alex stop setting the pipes. He made the mistake of suggesting to Alex that the film would be “dubbed over anyway” with some other Pipe Band’s recording. Unsurprisingly the director was left completely chastened by P.M. Alex who told him there would be only the 214 playing on this filming and that no debate would follow! Indeed that, as they say, was that. There was a further altercation where the aforesaid director wanted the band en-mass to rush clutching their instruments head long into the café in pursuit of the goodies. Alex refused this direction point blank aware of the prospective damage to the bands instruments and left his “new best chum” with the take it or leave it compromise that only the big drum would feature!