

“Keighley and District Caledonian Society”

This is one of a trio of Alex’s tunes aligned to the 214 BB’s connection with The Rutherglen pipe Band. The other two are “Nessie McFarlane” and the “Tartan Ball”.

Willie McDonald, in the image below sitting on the right served his Boys’ Brigade Time in the 214 during The Second World War. Gus MacDonald (not a relation of Willie’s) is on the left with Tom McColl (father of Alan McColl Secretary of The 214 ex-members association) standing.



Willie tells the tale that along with Jimmy Baxter, Pipe Major of the Rutherglen, they were guest pipers at the annual gala dance of the Keighley and District Caledonian Society where they led the Grand March. Willie recounts that their visit to Yorkshire was reminiscent of “*All Creatures’ Great and Small*” as they spent time with Donald Campbell doing his rounds in his role as the local veterinary surgeon. They enjoyed a couple of years performing at this event, but Alex MacIver was to step in and become the regular piper at this fandango!

Donald Campbell was Jimmy Baxter’s brother-in-law and learned his piping in The Rutherglen. When he completed his Vet School studies in Glasgow, he became a partner in a veterinary practice in Keighley in Yorkshire, a town better known for its Rugby League team than for having a Caledonian Society!

Donald and Alex MacIver, along with Bill McDonald, were in the Rutherglen Band for many years. Donald’s sister married Jimmy Baxter. In due course Donald had four of a family in Yorkshire. Two of his sons Donald jnr. and Alistair became pipers, and both had lessons from Alex when he visited Yorkshire and when the family were on holiday in Scotland. Donald jnr. in particular became a very good player and served as a piper in the Scots Guards’ Pipe Band for several years. He now lives in Hardgate and is the piping tutor to the schoolchildren in Tiree. He works in the library at Glasgow University and is piper to the Rector of the University. The other brother, Alistair Campbell was Tony Blair’s spin doctor!

As a consequence of an unfortunate accident when he was “savaged by a sow”, Donald senior had to relinquish front line veterinary activities. While he was castrating her piglets, the sow took exception, reared up, knocked him down and savaged his knee. As a result of this serious injury he gave up his practice and took up a position in a government department utilising his veterinary experience and knowledge.



Donald Campbell, far right, and Alex MacIver lead the “Grand March” of Keighley and District Caledonian Society’s Tartan Ball as they did for a number of years.

Donald and Alex were both committee members of the Scottish Pipers association.

The manuscript of the tune “Keighley and District Caledonian Society”, in Alex’s hand shows the date as 26th November, 1960.