

THE 214th GLASGOW COMPANY OF THE BOYS' BRIGADE

SURE AND STEDFAST

**Transcript of a recording Broadcast on Tuesday 24th of April 1962
including an interview with Pipe Major Alex MacIver.**



Winners 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.



Pipe Major Alex MacIver at Inverness 1966

"A SKIRL OF THE PIPES"

by

214 Glasgow Company The Boys' Brigade

Pipe-Major Alex. MacIver

Transmission: Tuesday 24th April 1962: 5.35/5.50 p.m. (SHS)

Recording: Saturday 7th April, 1962, 11.15/12.15 p.m. (Rehearsal 10.00am)

Speech Rec. 12.30/1.00 p.m.

Rec. No. : TGW

MACPHEE:

Around the Glasgow area particularly, the pipe band of the 214th Company of the Boys' Brigade has a high reputation. Indeed, the standard of its performances has earned the highest awards for Junior pipe bands. The man in charge of it is Alex. MacIver, who is himself a piping enthusiast. When was the band formed, Alick? Is it an old band?

MACIVER:

Not really. It was established as we know it in 1938. That was an important year, for it was then that Alex. Ibell began to take an active interest in it. He instituted regular practices and he made it a strict condition that no boy would be allowed to parade with the band until he had proved himself as a player. I was one of his boys and I succeeded him as Pipe Major.

I am very proud of the fact that he is still with us instructing the boys and instilling into them his own enthusiasm and love for the pipes.

With him, we have assistance from Joseph King and Daniel Finlay and I assure you there is no happier Company anywhere than the 214th Glasgow Company.

Alex Ibell was the staunch bedrock of the band of the 214 BB based at Gordon Park Church in Whiteinch. He was the man who taught Alex MacIver, Joe King and Dan Finlay. That foursome would become the guiding force behind the legend of the Pipe Band of The 214th Glasgow Company of The Boys' Brigade.



ALEX FERGUSON IBELL



Joe King in his Renfrew uniform and playing his famous pipes.



Dan Finlay In his KOSB'S uniform and as a 214 Staff Sergeant.

MACPHEE: That's a very fine tribute. Now, don't you think we should have some music?

ALEX. Yes. What would you like? - Three marches?

MACPHEE: That should make a good selection.

ALEX.: Well, first of all, a tune named "Alex. Ibell", as a tribute to him from all the boys who served in the band. Then "Kirkhill", followed by "Captain MacNeill of Ugadale".

MACPHEE: I'm sure we would all like to hear these marches when the boys are ready.

(Alex. Ibell (march)
Kirkhill do.
Capt. MacNeill of Ugadale (do.)

MACPHEE: Thank you. Although you did not mention it I take it that you composed that new tune.

ALEX.: Ach, we don't mention these things.

MACPHEE: Do you have any difficulty in recruiting new members?

ALEX.: No. Our difficulty is one of selection. Any members of the Company who would like to join the band are never turned away. Some, as you can understand, soon realise they cannot make the grade so they drop out. They just stop coming to the practices.

MACPHEE: You do set a very high standard.

ALEX.: We try to.

MACPHEE: How do you set about achieving that?

ALEX.: Well, the first thing we do is to give each boy a good grounding of the music. Then they take up the chanter. After they master that we give them simple tunes. With that they get the rhythm of the music and it's not until we are satisfied that they are ready for it that we put them on the pipes. I can assure you they have a very thorough apprenticeship.

MACPHEE: And that's what makes them so successful in competitions.

ALEX.: It helps any way.

MACPHEE: I know you have won the Shield presented by the Glasgow Highland Club on several occasions. That's the trophy awarded to the best Boys' Brigade band in the Glasgow area.

ALEX.: That's so.

MACPHEE: And how many times have you won it?

ALEX.: We have won it 15 times and we have held it during the past thirteen years.

MACPHEE: That's a wonderful record. Now, what about the World Junior Championship of the Scottish Pipe Band Association?

ALEX.: We have won that on five occasions, but I think our proudest honour came last year when we won a new Trophy awarded to what is described as the Champions of Champions among Juvenile bands.

MACPHEE: Congratulations and with that distinction I feel we should have some more music.

ALEX.: A march, strathspey and reel?

MACPHEE: One of your competition groups.

ALEX.: Yes.

MACPHEE: And what tunes do you suggest?

ALEX.: The march "The Stirlingshire Militia", followed by "John Roy Stewart" a strathspey, and then the reel "Dr. MacPhail".

MACPHEE: That's a testing group. Let's hear the boys play these tunes.

(The Stirlingshire militia (m)
John Roy Stewart (s)
Dr. MacPhail (r)

MACPHEE: Thank you. You must be proud of the boys.

ALEX.: Yes, but these boys do much more than play in the band. Each one of them has to take a full share in the many activities that give life to the work of the church and they must be regular in their attendance at the Bible Class. We insist on that just as we do on discipline. We try to ensure that they will grow up and be worthy and responsible members of whatever community in which they may be placed.

MACPHEE: What Church are they associated with?

ALEX.: Gordon Park Church, Whiteinch.

MACPHEE:

Do they enjoy being in the band with all the discipline you maintain?

ALEX.:

Yes, but you know boys will be boys, and there are occasions when we allow them certain latitudes. I remember one camp we were at. We sent the boys off to bed at the usual time and then we went for a walk before turning in ourselves. When we got back, in about half an hour's time we were surprised to hear the sound of a good-going Ceilidh. We couldn't understand this and we immediately made for the Ceilidh tent. It was the one next to ours, and when we reached it there we found our boys all in their pyjamas singing their heads off to the accompaniment of a guitar played by a boy from another Company! They were having a high old time and thoroughly enjoying themselves. Unfortunately, for them they didn't notice us until we reached the door of the tent and then you should have seen the scatter! I never saw a Ceilidh coming to so abrupt an end!

MACPHEE:

I hope you didn't say anything to them.

ALEX.:

Not until next morning. We couldn't let it pass without a word of warning. Discipline must always be observed and it is essential that they know what is expected of them in the way of behaviour and live up to it.

MACPHEE: That's true. And the mention of a Ceilidh is a good cue for more music. What's it to be this time?

ALEX.: How would a Slow March and a Jig do?

MACPHEE: Excellent, but that's rather a difficult sequence for boys.

ALEX.: Yes, but I think we can manage it.

MACPHEE: What are the tunes?

ALEX.: The slow march "Mo Dhachaidh"- My home- and the Jig "Paddy's Leather Breeches".

MACPHEE: Well, before you play these tunes, let me thank you for playing for us. I hope the boys will keep up their standards and win many more prizes. Maybe the boys who are listening who are interested in piping, will realise now what they have to do before they can really master the bagpipes. Now I will ask the band to end this programme with the Slow March "Mo Dhachaidh" - My home - and the Jig "Paddy's Leather Breeches". Thank you, Pipe-Major.

ALEX.: Thank you, and best wishes to all boys playing in Pipe Bands.

MACPHEE: And now the music.

(Mo Dhachaidh
Paddy's Leather Breeches)