

The
Voice

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John Bottomley
EDITOR

john@johnbottomleybagpipes.com

Shawn Hall
ART DIRECTOR

design@shawnhalldesign.com

Editorial Inquiries/Letters
THE VOICE
voiceditor@euspba.org

ADVERTISING INQUIRIES
John Bottomley
voiceditor@euspba.org

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submissions, news items, and
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ON THE COVER:

Callum Vinson and his bagpipe at
the Virginia Highland Games. Callum
is the great grandson of John Murray,
a founder of the EUSPBA. Callum's
sister Riley is also making a name
for herself as a highland dancer.



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- Jack Taylor
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EUSPBA OFFICERS

Dan Cole

PRESIDENT

president@euspba.org

Jim Dillahey

VICE PRESIDENT

vicepres@euspba.org

Sheldon Hamblin

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

zecsec@euspba.org

Betsy Bethel-McFarland

RECORDING SECRETARY

recsec@euspba.org

Matt Wood

TREASURER

treasurer@euspba.org

Carole Hackett

OFFICER-AT-LARGE

oalone@euspba.org

Tom Burnham

OFFICER-AT-LARGE

oaltwo@euspba.org

BRANCH CHAIRS

Metro Branch

Joe Brady, Jr.

metro@euspba.org

Midatlantic Branch

Mary Wallace

midatlantic@euspba.org

Northeast Branch

Brendan O'Reilly

northeast@euspba.org

Southwest Branch

Kenton Adler

southwest@euspba.org

Ohio Valley Branch

Andrew Duncan

ohiovalley@euspba.org

Southern Branch

Bill Caudill

south@euspba.org

Helen Harlow

MEMBERSHIP

COORDINATOR

24 Highlander Dr.

Fredricksburg, VA 22406

(540)373-4890

membership@euspba.org



Chuck Murdoch

Photos by Trish Dean.

Chuck Murdoch closed out his illustrious piping and judging career at the Scotland, CT highland games in appropriately Scottish weather.

His final competitor was Gil Mason, in the 2/4 march event. Chuck has promised a reflection on his lifetime of experience for the next issue of the Voice.



Judges Nancy Tunnickliff, Leslie Webster, Patti Nisco, Gordie Peters, Norm McLeod, and John Bottomley lined up to hear Chuck judge his final event.



A photograph of a man with a beard and a black shirt playing bagpipes on a stage. The scene is lit with green spotlights, creating a dramatic atmosphere. The bagpipes have red chanter pipes and a black bag. The man is looking towards the camera with an expressive face.

TUNE FASTER. ENJOY PIPING!

When playing in Bb is required, the Bb- Campbell tunable chanter is the instrument of choice for Christian Haerinck, piper in the French Canadian folk band Crépuscule (meaning Twilight).

Crépuscule just completed recording their new album. Watch for it soon!

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Americans Reclaim US Junior Solo Bagpiping and Solo Snare Drumming Championship Titles

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania - November 18-19, 2016:

The Tenth Annual Balmoral Classic US Junior Solo Junior Bagpiping and Solo Snare Drumming Championships were won by Piper Kolya Sier of Gilman, Illinois, and drummer Blair Beaton of Scotia, New York. Last year's winners of the US title were Gavin MacKay and MacKenzie Chamberlain, both from Ontario, Canada. Twelve pipers from five states plus Ontario and Scotland, and four drummers from New York, Ohio, and Ontario competed in the double event contest.

The competition is produced by the Balmoral School of Piping and Drumming and was held in the McGonigle Theatre, Central Catholic High School, in the university district of Pittsburgh. Arthur McAra was the emcee. Piping judges were Robert Wallace (Scotland), Ian K. MacDonald (Canada), Jimmy Bell (USA). Drumming judges were Gordon Bell and Jon Quigg of the USA. Jon filled in for Adrian Mordaunt who was originally scheduled but unable to attend because of work obligations.

Piper Sier won the MSR contest and a set of Duncan MacRae bagpipes donated by McCallum Bagpipes. He was second in the Piobaireachd contest. Mark McClennan won the Piobaireachd contest and a set of DN2E David Naill bagpipes, but came in 3rd in the MSR, resulting in the Overall Winner Trophy to Kolya Sier by one point.

Kolya took home the E.W. Littlefield Jr trophy for his MSR win, as well as the Ralph and Patricia Murray Memorial Trophy for the Overall Winner. Mark McClennan captured the Balmoral Trophy for his Piobaireachd first.

PIPING RESULTS: Piobaireachd

1. Mark McClennan – *Tulloch Ard*
2. Kolya Sier – *Corrienessan's Salute*
3. Charles Morris – *The Old Men of the Shells*
4. Colin Johnstone – *Sound of the Sea*
5. Evan Burlew – *MacFarlane's Gathering*

PIPING RESULTS: March, Strathspey, Reel

1. Kolya Sier – *The Taking of Beaumont Hamel, Islay Ball, Fiona MacLeod*
2. Charles Morris – *Glenfinnan Highland Gathering, Susan MacLeod, John Morrison of Assynt House*
3. Mark McClennan – *John MacDonald of Glencoe, Susan MacLeod, John Morrison of Assynt House*
4. Colin Johnstone – *Dr. Alistair McLaren, Lady Loudon, Sound of Sleat*

5. Gemma Briggs – *Alan Dodd's Fareweill to Scotland, The Doune of Invernochty, Drumlilthe*

PIPING RESULTS: Overall

1. Kolya Sier
2. Mark McClennan
3. Charles Morris
4. Colin Johnstone
5. Evan Burlew

Prizes for 2nd to 5th place pipers included blackwood chanters donated by MacLellan Bagpipes and Pipers Hut, a set of kitchen pipes donated by Scotts Highland Services, a Fox Fur Sporrans donated by Celtic Croft, and additional prizes donated by Duncan's Highland Supply, Temple Records, Ceol Sean, St. Kilda USA, Jim McGillivray, and the Balmoral School.

Blair Beaton of Scotia, New York was the Overall Winner in the Drumming contest, scoring first in both the MSR and Hornpipe/Jig, and taking home a Premier HTS800 Premier Snare Drum donated by Henderson Imports of Traverse City, Michigan, as well as the David Peet Memorial Trophy, the Pittsburgh Firefighters Memorial Trophy, and the St. Andrews Society of Pittsburgh Trophy.

DRUMMING RESULTS: March, Strathspey, and Reel

1. Blair Beaton – *Balmoral Highlanders, Bogan Lochan, John Morrison of Assynt House*
2. Isabella Jackson – *Clan MacRae Society, Arniston Castle, Alick C. MacGregor*
3. Brody Duncan – *Brigadier Ronald Cheape of Tironan, Blair Drummond, John Morrison of Assynt House*
4. Dan Evans – *The Highland Wedding, Maggie Cameron, Mrs. MacPherson of Inveran*

Isabella Jackson performs for judges Gordon Bell and Jon Quigg.



DRUMMING RESULTS: Hornpipe and Jig

1. Blair Beaton – *Jacobite Charge, John Patterson's Mare*
2. Isabella Jackson – *Uphold the Right, The Curlew*
3. Dan Evans – *The Tourist, Donald Cameron's Powder Horn*
4. Brody Duncan – *Crossing of the Minch, Donald Cameron's Powder Horn*

DRUMMING RESULTS: Overall

1. Blair Beaton
2. Isabella Jackson
3. Brody Duncan
4. Dan Evans

Henderson Imports of Traverse City, Michigan also generously donated prizes for the 2nd to 4th place drummers: a Gator XL Lite Aluminum Snare Carrier w/removable padding system, a Gibraltar 6000 Series Heavyweight Snare Stand, and an Innovative Red Gum Rubber Practice pad with Black Rim. Additionally, Henderson donated a pair of Andante snare drum sticks to each drumming competitor.

PIPING CONTESTANTS:

- Gemma Briggs, Wooster, Ohio
Alex Burlew, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania
Evan Burlew, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania
Keir Dennis, Guelph, Ontario
Tyler Destremps, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania
Ana Fairbanks-Mahnke, Wooster, Ohio
Joseph Horwath, Saginaw, Michigan
Colin Johnstone, Aurora, Ontario
Steven MacDonald, Dundee, Scotland
Mark McClennan, Guelph, Ontario
Charles Morris, Agoura Hills, California
Kolya Sier, Gilman, Illinois

DRUMMING CONTESTANTS

- Blair Beaton, Scotia, New York
Brody Duncan, Hamilton, Ontario
Dan Evans, Rochester, New York,
Isabella Jackson, Wooster, Ohio

PIPERS FOR THE DRUMMERS:

- Robbie Beaton for Blair Beaton
Michael Crawley for Isabella Jackson
Brendan Culver for Brody Duncan
Andrew Carlisle for Dan Evans (H/J)
Brendan Culver for Dan Evans (MSR)

The weekend began on Friday evening with a Gathering / Reception for the out of town contestants, supporters of the



Anna Fairbanks-Mahnke playing her piobaireachd.

Balmoral Classic, and the public, which featured music by the ensemble Road to the Isles and the Pittsburgh Scottish Country Dancers. Judges Jimmy Bell, Robert Wallace, and Iain K. MacDonald also entertained with solo musical selections, and the Toronto Police Pipe Band treated guests with two of their concert medleys.

The event was made possible by grants from the Sage Foundation, the Heinz Endowment, the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, an Anonymous Foundation, The Pittsburgh Firefighters Memorial Pipe Band, the St. Andrews Society of Pittsburgh, and individual donations. The Friday and Saturday events featured separate silent auctions and raffles each day.

Silent Auction donors included: Nemaocolin Woodlands Resort, Ligonier Golf Club, Birdsfoot Golf Club, the Boys of the Lough, Caliban Bookstore, Calliope: the Pittsburgh Folk Arts Society, The Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh,

The Irish Design Center, Scottish Gourmet USA, Kathleen Cleaver, Joan Green, Max's Allegheny Tavern, Pittsburgh Concert Chorale, Mullaney's Harp and Fiddle, Riley's Pour House, the Priory Inn, The Scottish Banner, The Piping Times, Temple Records, Pittsburgh Glass Center, River City Brass Band, Pittsburgh Opera, East End Food Coop, Church Brew Works, Pittsburgh Zoo & PPG Aquarium, Gail Killmeyer, Jill Pifferetti, Heather Parks, & George Balderose. The contestants' welcome bags included issues of the Piping Times, the Scottish Banner, The Balmoral Collection of Hymns Arranged for the Highland Bagpipe, and brochures from Celtic Croft and Scottish Gourmet.

During the evening after the Saturday contest, there was the award ceremony followed by an outstanding concert with the Toronto Police Pipe Band to an audience of approximately three hundred fifty that also featured dancers from the Pittsburgh Celtic Spirit School of Highland Dance and Burke-Conroy School of Irish Dance.

Details of the Toronto Police Pipe Band Concert

ACT 1

1. Dusk Jig Set - *Dusk* (S.McKeown), *Flight From Vail* (B.Livingstone), *Jig of Slurs* (GS MacLennan), *The Irish Cousins* (B.Livingstone), *John Patterson's Mare* (D MacLeod Setting)

2. Compound Marches (Gypsy Marches) - *Gypsy March* (S.McKeown), *City of Wellington Police Pipers*, *The March of the King of Laois*
3. Cheape March/Strathspey/Reel - *Brig. Gen. Cheape of Tiroran*, *Susan MacLeod*, *Charlie's Welcome*
4. Bill Livingstone Solo - *Lord Lovat's Lament* (*piobaireachd*)
5. Gold Ring Medley - *Gold Ring*, *Farewell to Nigg*, *Struan Robertson*, *Roddy MacDonald's Favorite*, *Jack Daniels Reel* (w/Irish Dancers)
6. The Canon - *Pachelbel's Canon*, *CK Barr* (S.McKeown), *The Canon*

ACT 2

7. Hornpipes, all written by current members - *The Parker Walk* (B.Livingstone), *The Piper's Gavotte* (B.Livingstone), *The NS Nightcrawler* (J.MacKay)
8. Reay MacKay - *Reay MacKay*, *Box Player Extraordinaire!* (B.Livingstone), *The Centenary Jewel* Bill Livingstone and Colin MacKay on Keys
9. 21 Days - *Suite* - written by S McKeown
10. Tag Solos - (Sean, Nick, Ian) Recent solo competition success: Ian K - 2016 double Gold medallist; Sean - 2016 double gold runner up, 2015 Silver medal; Nick - 2016 Silver medal, Livingstone, Braemar Gold medal winner

The Balmoral Classic always goes beyond just the contests. Here the Toronto Police Pipe Band entertains the audience by playing for highland dancers as part of their concert.



11. Slow Marches - *Farewell to Pass Street* (S.McKeown), *One Medley March* (S.McKeown), *Farewell to Pass Street* (S.McKeown)

12. Ian MacMaster Medley - *Ian MacMaster* (L.Hilton), *Michael MacDonald's Jig* (J. MacGillivray), *Malcolm Ferguson* (D. MacLeod), *Rodney Hull QC* (B.Livingstone), *The Iron Man* (JS Skinner), *The Sister's Reel*, *Sandy Cameron* (w/Scottish Dancers)

13. Panda Jig Set - *The Panda* (G Duncan), *Calliope House* (D.Richardson), *Donald Cameron's Powder Horn* (D.MacLeod)

14. Encore - *Carol of the Bells* - jazz version

**Toronto Police Pipe Band
The Players - Pipers
(additional instruments noted)**

Sean McKeown - P/M
Ian K. MacDonald - P/S
Bill Livingstone - Keyboards
Jamie Douglas
Brendan Culver
Craig MacDonald
Bryan Huddleston
Tommy Munroe
David Duckett
Pat Smith
Jarrod Purvis
Nick Hudson - Irish Whistles
MacGregor Van De Ven
John MacKay
Tyler Harris
Colin Johnstone - keyboards
Alister Murray - drone tuning

Drummers/percussion

Craig Stewart L/D - snare, various percussion
Sean Allan - Bass
Lauren Taylor - L/Tenor, percussion
Leah Westervelt - Tenor, percussion
Brina Reddcliff - Tenor
Miles Bennington - Snare
Brody Duncan - Snare
Iain Cleaton - snare, percussion

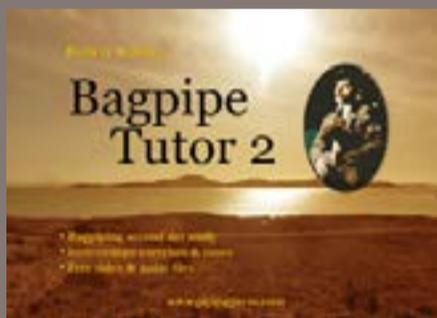
Submitted by:
George Balderose
Executive Director
The Balmoral Classic

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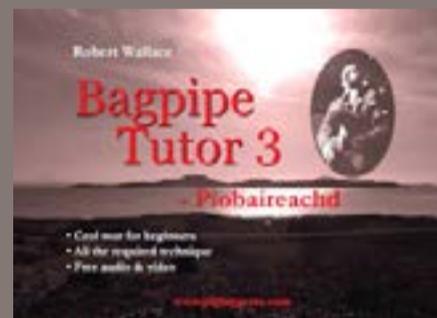
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The Piobaireachd Conference, 2017

The 2017 Piobaireachd conference, featuring guest speaker Dr. Angus MacDonald, will be held From March 31 through April 2, once again at the Madison Hotel in Morristown, NJ. The event is sponsored by the EUSPBA and The Piobaireachd Society. As you may know, Angus is one of the principals behind the Clan MacDonald Quaich Annual Piobaireachd competition in Skye. The contest has been running since 1986 and was previously sponsored by Glenfiddich. This event requires the invited participants to submit settings of tunes from the Donald MacDonald Manuscript.

Along with the conference, there will also be a EUSPBA Premier Piobaireachd contest on Friday night, March 31 and Premier MSR contest on Saturday night April 1st. Also, Master Classes, in which a top player performs a ground and early variations of a tune, followed immediately by a critique from Dr. MacDonald, will allow attendees to benefit from hearing, not just top level playing, but also some of the finer points of interpretation that they can apply to their own playing.

The weekend is set up with a variety of opportunities to improve your general understanding, abilities and

appreciation of Piobaireachd. It is important to understand that all classes are inclusive regardless of your competing grade or technical abilities. This is a weekend set up for you!

The schedule is:

Premier Piobaireachd, Friday commencing at 6 pm.

Saturday, April 1 @ 9AM – 5PM

- "First Principles" of Piobaireachd: 9AM – 10:30AM
- Master Class: 10:30AM – 12PM
- Lunch: 12PM – 1PM
- Discussion & Presentation (Selection of Smaller Tunes): 1PM – 3:00PM
- Master Class: 3PM– 5:00PM
- Premier MSR, 7 pm

Sunday, April 2 @ 9AM – 1PM

- Discussion & Presentation – Donald MacDonald Manuscripts: 9AM – 10:30AM
- Master Class: 10:30AM – 12PM
- Weekend Ticket covers cost of entry into events and attendance at Conference
- Make check out to "EUSPBA" and mail to Matt Wood – Treasurer, 14 Meadowview Ave., Succasunna, N.J. 07876



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Piobaireachd Conference 2016: A Participant's Take

By: Derek Midgley

In the sea of choices and events that is the yearly piping calendar now a days, there was in February of 2016 a new one worth your patronage. Called simply the Piobaireachd Conference, this new event combines all of the desired topics of Ceol Mor for any and every serious piper to want to attend. Jim Stack of New Jersey came up with the idea of combining a top solo piping competition in the greater metro area and a workshop to help all of us get through those long winter months. As an esteemed competitor and judge, Jim knew all the little things his fellow pipers look for at an event such as this and did an impressive amount of work to bring it to fruition. Taking a cue from the title, this event is literally a conference in the way that few other piping "workshops" are. As such, it was one of the most worthwhile events one could hope for in furthering piobaireachd education.

Although the piping calendar demands many more of our weekends than even a few years ago, I have always enjoyed the off-season events more as it is unencumbered by the insistence of that next event so close in the future. It is precisely these times that we take down the veneer of competition and harken back to our academic and egalitarian musician roots where we return as students always searching for a more complete understanding of Ceol Mor. In doing so we not only improve as competitors but as musicians as well.

The first annual Piobaireachd Conference featured the highly respected Colin MacLellan. Armed with both PDFs and mp3s as his weapons of choice, he set the standard of instruction quite high for future years. While doing so, he navigated the treacherous waters of the Piobaireachd Society's annual set list of tunes (and others) for us voracious learners, and also highlighted older and alternative settings of these tunes, bringing a very wide range of possible choices and interpretations hitherto unknown by many without the resources. It was really quite exquisite.

The weekend however, hadn't started simply with lectures. It was kicked off in proper form with the first EUSPBA Premier contest of 2016. With some of the best pipers in EUSPBA today looking more to impress our overseas guest rather than just jockey for a prize, the audience was certainly entertained musically both on Friday night with the Piobaireachd event and on Saturday night with a double MSR event. In between these evenings competition was a

master class on Saturday afternoon, which saw many of the previous nights players perform an additional piobaireachd that wasn't featured on Friday night. Comments flowed into questions, then counter questions and counter comments. It was an honest forthright discussion not often seen. This was a superb way to showcase the medal tunes for the year in both a competitive and non-competition fashion in an educational environment serving both player and listener excellently over the course of the weekend. This alone was worth the price of admission.

The only drawback of the first Piobaireachd Conference was that more people didn't attend. This is a jewel of a concept that Jim Stack put together for both top active competitors and students of the art. Whatever grade or level piper you might be, this is the sort of event worth making the time for. I would have loved something like this when I was growing up. For 2017, I'm told that it will be moving to April 1st in an attempt to directly help people kick off the competition season. Hopefully you will be able to take advantage of the opportunity. I'm already looking forward to it and whoever the next guest speaker will be. Make it happen, you won't regret it.

Ben MacClamrock performing during the Master Class at the 2016 event. This year's conference will be held April 1, and features Dr. Angus MacDonald as guest speaker.



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Tuners can be incredibly useful tools, and are most effective when their use is combined with theoretical and practical music knowledge and experience. My personal preference is for Korg brand products, so I'll be using them as visual aids. They're inexpensive, easy to get, and easy to use. If your pitch is too low, flat (b), the needle goes to the left and flashes a red light, and if it's too high, sharp (#), the needle goes to the right and flashes a different red light. If your pitch is just right, the needle goes straight up and a green light applauds silently.

I use a CA-30 and a TM-40, which have since been replaced in the manufacturing process by the CA-40 and the TM-50. The CA-30 is about 1.5in by 3in, and the TM-40 is about 2in by 4in, so either will fit in a pocket or sporran. The CA-40 is just a tuner, and the TM-50 has functions for both tuner and metronome. I generally recommend the TM-50 to students because it has the best bang for your buck: both tuner and metronome are excessively useful and you get both functions for about \$40, whereas just the tuner usually costs about \$30.

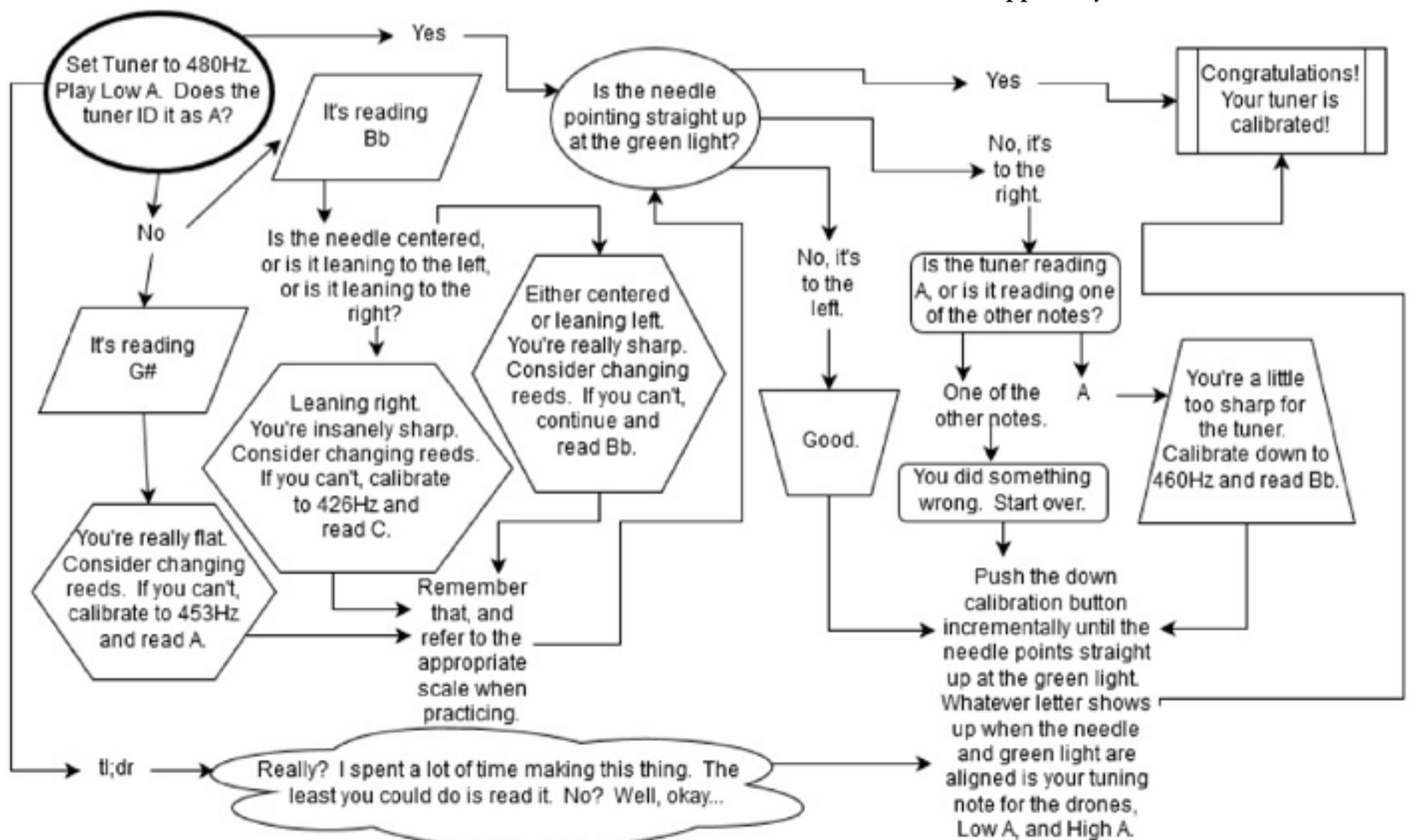
Calibration

Who has two thumbs and just learned how to make flowcharts? This guy! If you don't know how to calibrate a tuner already, you may find this chart to be helpful. Start by turning the tuner on, followed by pushing the up "CALIB" arrow until the number in the top left corner reads 480Hz. Grab your pipes and set the tuner on a table, or music stand, at or slightly below chanter height. If you're a beginner, or new to tuners, you'll have an easier time of this at first if you stopper your drones. Play a short tune to get your pressure settled, then follow the flowchart from the circle in the top left corner.

The scales to which the chart refers are as follows:

We play:	LG	LA	B	C(#)	D	E	F(#)	HG	HA
Tuner hears:	Ab	Bb	C	D	Eb	F	G	Ab	Bb
Tuner hears:	Bb	C	D	E	F	G	A	Bb	C

The reason for calibrating down all the way to C in cases of extremely sharp chanters (I can only remember hearing a handful of chanters that sharp in 20 years of playing), is one of personal preference. I'd rather deal with one flat than with five sharps, or worse a mix of sharps and flats, which is what would happen if you were to calibrate to B.





Use

Now you have the thing calibrated, here are two ways to use it.

1: Tune Long Tones (for improving... tone)

- a Set up the tuner at pipe chanter height
- b Blow up your pipes and play long notes up and down the scale, 10-20 seconds per note
- c Keep an eye on the tuner as you play, with the goal of keeping the needle steady
 - i **IMPORTANT:** The main goal here is not to have the needle line up with the green light, it's to have constant pressure from one note to the next, and for the needle to remain still when holding each note. Some notes might be out of tune. For this exercise, that's okay. This will help you identify and fix any fluttering or unsteadiness in your blowing.
 - ii **HINT 1:** Most people have certain notes that are unsteady. The usual suspects are HG, D, HA, and F, but any note could be an issue. Figure out what notes are yours to improve, and spend a bit more time holding those notes and playing transitions into and out of them.
 - iii **HINT 2:** This is as much a mental exercise as it is a physical one. Most people find their mind spinning its wheels a few notes into the scale when playing it this slowly. Embrace the pain. After a few days of practicing this exercise, you'll find yourself able to hold the notes for longer. I occasionally play this exercise holding the individual notes for minutes at a time. It does cool things to your brain. Try it.

2: Tuning Other People's Drones

- a Having calibrated the tuner to the piper, take a moment to listen to the piper and try to audiate (hear in your head) the pitch that the drones SHOULD sound to be in tune with LA. The goal here is to find the tonal center, which is LA.
- b Hold the tuner between your thumb and forefinger, making sure not to block the mic.
- c Start with the outside tenor drone.
- d Wrap your tuner hand's pinky, or pinky and ring finger if you have big hands, around the outside edge of the ring cap, partially shielding the top of the drone from wind and getting a secure grip of the upper section of the drone in the process.
 - i Be sure that you keep the tuner a consistent distance between 1-2 inches from the bush, with the mic centered over it. If you're too close or too far away it'll interfere with the tuning.
 - ii Angle the tuner so the face of it receives and reflects the sound back to you to better hear the change in tuning.
- e Grab and brace the lower section of the drone (middle section for bass drones) with your free hand.
 - i Be careful not to push the drone down into the bag, or to pull it up either, as that may unsteady the piper and negatively affect the tuning. If you're pushing or pulling the bag while you tune, when you let go the tuning will change slightly.
- f If the tuner registers the drone as flat, work the upper section down the tuning pin until it shows steadily green.



- g If the tuner registers the drone as sharp, work the upper section up the tuning pin until it shows steadily green.
- h If the drone is wavering, try to center the range of the needle.
 - i There are four main causes of wavering drones: 1. Underblowing, 2. Overblowing, 3. Unsteady blowing, 4. Something wrong with the instrument. If it's underblowing, you'll see the needle hit its high point and immediately start to flatten. If it's overblowing, the needle will hit a high point and stay there for a moment before flattening a little. If it's generally unsteady, it could be all over the place. In the first case, I recommend setting the drones a little sharper than the middle of the range of the needle. If it's the second, I recommend setting it just a little flat of the top point in the range. Regardless of the type of unsteadiness, direct the piper to the Tone Longtones exercise. It wouldn't hurt to use the unsteadiness as an opportunity to check that the instrument itself is in good working order, though that should go without saying.
- i When you have completed steps d-h on the outside tenor drone, repeat them on the middle tenor drone.
 - i As you do, use your ear to help get the middle drone in tune with the outside tenor.
- j When the middle tenor has been tuned, repeat steps d-h on the bass drone.
- k Once you've tuned all three of the drones, wait a moment and then go over them all again. It may take several rounds of fine-tuning to get them just right.
 - i **IMPORTANT:** Korg tuners will get you close, but you

can't rely on just your eyes to get the drones in tune. There's a small but definite range of subtlety that the tuner won't pick up, so use your ear with the tuner to make the minute adjustments.

- ii **TUNING BANDS SUGGESTION 1:** Always tune band members while they play in the circle, as even experienced pipers may blow at a different pressure when playing on their own.
- iii **TUNING BANDS SUGGESTION 2:** Always tune all the band drones to the same tuner calibration, regardless of the individual tuning of the chanter. If there's considerable discrepancy in the tuning of the chanters, find the centermost chanter in the range and calibrate and tune to it. Ideally, some effort would be made to bring the outliers into closer alignment with the ensemble's tonal center.
- iv **Protip:** Each of the tuners that I use fits in the grip of a \$2 selfie stick. I'm of a somewhat smaller than average stature, and used to have difficulty reaching the bass drones of most taller pipers. For \$2, that's not an issue anymore. It takes some getting used to, because the grip is different when holding what is effectively a modern atlatl, but it's had overall a tremendously positive effect on my ability to contribute to the set-up of a band.

I hope this helps! If you would like to learn more about how to use tuners, or about the theory and practices behind the structure of our scale and tuning methods (including but not limited to answers to the question "What is 'A440,' and why should bagpipers care?"), I am available for lessons.

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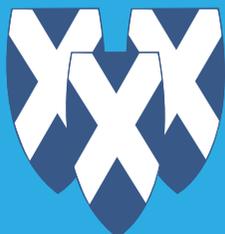
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Blackwood Background

By: Vince Janoski, from the Voice, Fall 2007

Vince's article gives a wonderful introduction to the many factors influencing the African Blackwood trade and supply.

What do toilet seats and Highland bagpipes have in common? No, this is not another abusive bagpipe joke—and the answer is not “people are happy to sit on them.” The answer is they, along with knife handles, bassoons, and traditional animal statues, are carved from the heartwood of the mpingo tree, otherwise known as *dalbergia melanoxylon*, or African blackwood.

But how much does the average piper know about the wood that drives our art? Over the last twenty or so years, screams of a blackwood shortage have waxed and waned from shouts of panic to dismissive shrugs. We currently seem to be in one of the shrugging periods as reports suggest the supply of African blackwood may take 80 or more years to be exhausted. That’s a lot of chanterers.

Recent timber import/export restrictions notwithstanding, bagpipe makers seem to have no trouble getting their hands on ample blackwood billets to keep on hand.

In the screaming periods, not more than ten to fifteen years ago, the supply of proper-aged blackwood came into short order. Deforestation in some African countries and overharvesting and excessive illegal logging in others such as Kenya, completely exhausted the supply of harvestable mpingo in the late 1980s and early 1990s. By some reports, under those earlier conditions, pipers would have seen the end of all-blackwood stands of drones by 2010. A growing global marketplace, however, has seen supplies of blackwood drawn from other, more resource rich countries. In 2007, there are more pipe makers than ever, and all are producing more seemingly quality blackwood bagpipes than has been seen in several generations. The mpingo tree does not seem to be in danger of extinction, however, the source of the current supply and the long-term viability of mpingo as a marketable wood are another matter.

Does the demand for the typical blackwood set of pipes exist to sustain affordable pipes? Would you pay \$12,000 or more for a typical set of blackwood bagpipes? By 2012 to 2020, the premium placed on mpingo billets just might place your basic set in that range.

Like any natural resource, the mpingo tree is subject to the natural cycles of weather, regional politics, local population

needs, and global economics. All of these things contribute to the variability and instability found in the timber trade of Africa, and the mpingo trade specifically.

We live in a consumer culture. Supply is fueled by demand. But it is that very demand that might all but cause the extinction of new blackwood stands of drones. Not because so many people will want to be pipers (or bassoonists, or clarinet players for that matter), but because the demand for fine furniture, fuel, and flooring, not to mention electronics such as cell phones, or the needs of local populations in harvesting countries might end up exhausting or diverting the marketable supply of blackwood for good.

What Is Blackwood?

What we call “African blackwood” is actually the heartwood of the mpingo tree and a member of the rosewood family. The raw tree is harvested and the thick outer layer of lighter, softer wood is removed to form pure, straight heartwood billets for market. The longest and straightest lengths of wood are sent for the musical instrument trade primarily, while the rest is used for traditional carving and the general trade.



Stacks of blackwood stockpiled at Murray Huggins' shop.

Although some very good sets of bagpipes are being made these days, and despite a larger global marketplace providing easier access to goods, good quality blackwood for musical instruments is not an easy thing to come by. The high value for billets on the open market will attest to this. Only the straightest lengths of wood and those most free of defects can be used for musical instruments, with the most being used for clarinets, oboes, and bassoons. This relies on straight trees that are only considered “harvestable” when they reach maturity in 70 years, although some trees are harvested as young as 30. Raw logs are normally seasoned and dried for up to 3 years before processing.



While that may seem like a long time to wait for quality timber, it gets even more difficult. Straight billets are normally a result of only a 10 percent yield of raw logs with a 90 percent waste rate for all timber harvested! Processing straight billets for musical instruments narrows the supply even further, those making up only 15 percent of the total yield of billets. Therefore only 1.5 percent of harvested, processed blackwood is available for any musical instruments.

Although bagpipes use the most blackwood per instrument (.006 cubic meters per set), they represent less than one-half of one percent of the total blackwood billets use for instruments, making quality blackwood supplies for bagpipes extremely sensitive to disruptions.

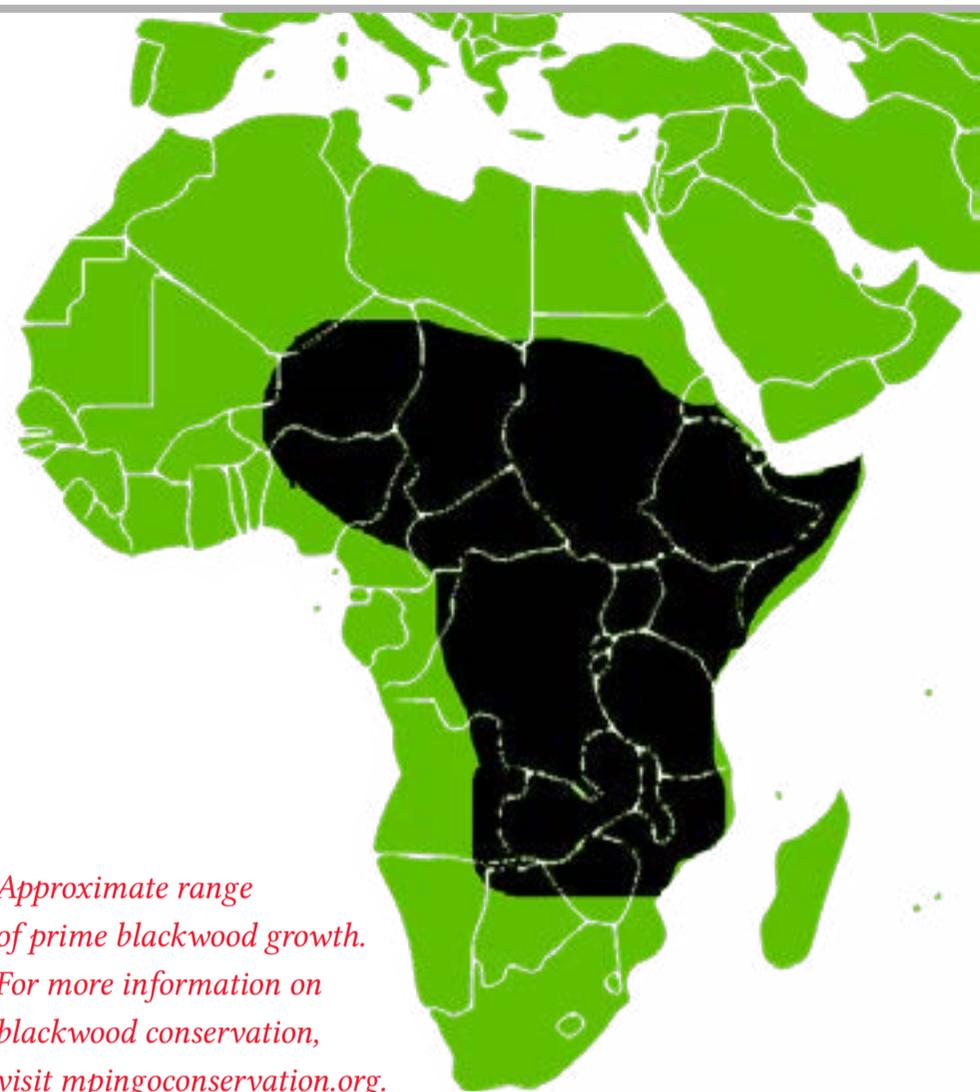
Coverage and harvest

Mpingo trees grow in a broad range of sub-Saharan Africa. The most accessible and harvestable timber, however, grows in what is called the miombo woodlands that stretch from Tanzania and Mozambique on the east, through the Democratic Rep. of Congo to Angola on the west. The majority of marketable mpingo timber is harvested in Tanzania where it is the national tree.

Some 250 million of the poorest people in Africa rely on wood as their primary source of fuel and the populations of mpingo harvesting countries are no different. Firewood is 75 percent of the energy consumption in sub-Saharan Africa. Timber represents 6 percent of the total \$10 billion GDP of Tanzania. Mpingo is only a small portion of harvested timber, but it is the most valuable timber harvested, with billets gathering US\$18,000 per cubic meter on the open market. Timber in general is a large industry, but market demand and demand for fuel wood far outstrips the regeneration of forestry.

Commercial timber licenses are not easily granted and are out of reach for many locals. Mpingo is also very expensive to harvest, requiring special equipment and treatment because of its dense and oily nature. It is also difficult to transport due to its growing locations. Many locals will often cut trees indiscriminately for charcoal (mpingo makes excellent fuel) and other domestic uses without regard for their commercial value. More viable local economic and export opportunities are found in farming and livestock, requiring clearcutting of forests by burning and illegal cutting.

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates that agriculture coupled with overgrazing and



Approximate range of prime blackwood growth. For more information on blackwood conservation, visit mpingoconservation.org.

slash and burn cultivation, is responsible for 70 percent of all deforestation. It's estimated that legal mpingo harvesting represents only 4 percent of mpingo trees cut.

Dangers

The above issues have led to the local depletion of mpingo in Kenya. Supply had been diminishing for years and in the mid-1990s, supply dried up entirely. Population expansion, commercial opportunities in agriculture, improved infrastructure all contributed to unregulated harvesting and export of valuable timbers such as mpingo. Rampant deforestation creates additional problems. A landscape devoid of trees increases soil erosion and desertification, making any replacement growth in such areas impossible. The FAO estimates that 4 million hectares of African forests are lost each year for a variety of purposes (an area twice the size of New Jersey). More than 13,000 square kilometers are lost through forest clearing alone. Much of this is a result of clear cutting for agriculture and illegal trade, population expansion, and harvesting for fuel. This rate has only reached this level within the last ten years leading to the extinction of rainforests on Africa's western coast. Nigeria has experienced the worst deforestation to date with more than one-half of its primary forests lost between the years 2000 to 2005 alone. At current rates, it is estimated that all of western Africa's forests will disappear by 2020.



Such activities can be considered the byproduct of developing global economy, but just as the world can benefit from growth in one country, dire consequences can be felt worldwide by the depletion of natural resources and unmanaged growth. Such rampant forest clearing through slash and burn techniques saturates the market with “illegal” timber, driving down market prices and undercutting local economies and legal operations, thereby diminishing the viability of valuable timbers such as mpingo.

In addition, forest clearing through burning negatively affects the stands of mpingo trees that are left for legitimate logging, causing multi-stemmed, diseased, and crooked trees which results in lower market value with billets unsuitable for musical instruments such as bagpipes.

Despite the fact that harvestable mpingo exists in ample quantities and will remain available for some time, it is more likely that current social, political, and economic trends will disrupt its continued availability. Although mpingo remains available, current rates of local and international trade remain unsustainable. Changing land use from forestry to agriculture, in addition to minimal regrowth programs and the constantly increasing demands of the local population, threaten the viability of mpingo as a marketable resource making what stocks that do exist more rare and expensive and less likely to see market, nevermind be available for making bagpipes.

And it just might be pipers’ appetite for antique or vintage sets of drones that would hammer that final nail in the coffin. Greater value placed on vintage sets and lower value on new sets would put pressure on the use of blackwood for drones, thereby diverting the wood to other uses. Cheaper blackwood for other uses might make it that much harder to obtain good quality wood for making bagpipes, and make obtaining instrument-quality wood prohibitive for many pipe makers, reducing the number of new sets. The resulting increased value of existing or vintage blackwood sets just might place bagpiping in general out of reach for the average enthusiast.

The continuous supply of mature blackwood today says more about a more active global marketplace than it does about the amount of supply or its method of harvest. Population expansion, greater worldwide trade, and demand for particular goods all contribute to satisfactory supplies of blackwood as a byproduct. Loggers are able

to reach mature trees deeper within forests because of improved roads. Population increases lead to more manpower to accomplish greater volume of harvest. By itself though, the mpingo tree does not provide the local population, much of whom live in poverty, with a sustainable or viable option for their own prosperity. The greatest threat to the supply of African blackwood these days would seem to be the very global marketplace that provides greater trade in timber generally.

Just as in Kenya, local infrastructure improvements—bridges, improved roads—can make cutting and transporting timber less expensive and more lucrative in other countries throughout sub-Saharan Africa—for a time. Such activities clear the way for changing land use making conservation programs and forest regeneration a low priority for the locals.

A decade of civil war and unrest in the Democratic Republic of Congo—as well as spillover racial violence in neighboring countries such as Rwanda—has allowed unmanaged exploitation of a number of natural resources. Timber conservation is probably the least fashionable use of national funds in countries such as DRC. Prime examples of this can be seen in the west of Africa where primary forests have disappeared, and illegal logging and resource harvesting increase at a rate that exceeds global averages. Locally, the mpingo tree is already easily ignored in favor of other economically viable harvests.

Turn off your Mobile for Blackwood

Next time you want to ponder the sustainable supply of mpingo, think of it the next time you make a call on your mobile phone. Who would have thought that an upgrade to that newer model phone, would make a dent in the supply of wood available for bagpipes?

It is not something that typically comes to mind, but the need for coltan, the primary mineral in cell phone and computer components has led to a host of local abuses in the DRC, fueling years of political unrest. Money is to be made in the mining of this mineral both for local workers and land owners.

Corruption is rampant as is abhorrent criminality such as increased rape and murder. Why does this matter? (Aside from the obvious humanitarian issues, that is.) Coltan is mined in the Congo river basin, deep in the heart of miombo woodlands. In a region where fast money is to be made from digging in the dirt to feed a hearty appetite for



electronic gizmos, an easy choice is made over commercial timber harvest when the land can be bought or stolen and clear cut for later mining. It's estimated that 1.1 million hectares of forests per year disappear in this area—an area nearly the size of Connecticut.

Timber money is just icing on the cake. The number of mobile phones has continued to grow by 30 percent annually, adding some 300 million phones each year. And current growth trends for personal mp3 players, handheld game systems, and smartphones such as the Blackberry show no sign of abating. The global appetite for flashy communication gadgets perhaps makes the greatest contribution to the instabilities under which all timber supplies—including mpingo—suffer.

Miombo forests suffer greatly across Africa. Their health is vital for the biodiversity that is needed for sustainable timber harvest, agriculture, and local prosperity. Conservation efforts across African countries result in large areas of protected land, but even with this, fragmentation of ecosystems result having a severe impact on the integrity of protected and unprotected lands. Add to this increased desertification and population growth and the conditions exist to threaten the sustainability of future markets for sensitive natural resources such as timber.

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Blackwood: Much Ado About Nothing?

By: John Bottomley

With January 2 approaching, and with African blackwood set to be added to the CITES listings, there has been a serious uptick in hand-wringing about what will become of our beloved pipes. How much will prices go up? How will we get them across borders?

The truth may be a lot easier to handle. Based on the letter that the US Fish and Wildlife Service released, the listing applies only to raw wood, not finished product, for a start, so completed instruments should not be an issue.

Also in the letter is a paragraph stating what importers and re-exporters of blackwood should do to certify their current, pre-restriction stocks. It states *“We recognize that there are numerous individuals and businesses in the United States that possess stockpiles of (blackwood) acquired before they were listed in the CITES Appendices and/or acquired after the species were listed in the CITES Appendices but with annotations that only covered raw material. We therefore provide the following suggestions for documenting these stockpiles. In the event that you wish to re-export previously acquired wood of these taxa from the United States, you will be asked to provide documentation showing that the wood to be exported was legally acquired, and in the case of pre-Convention wood, that it was acquired prior to the effective date for the CITES listing of that taxon. Examples of such documentation may include copies of CITES documents used for the import of the wood, sales receipts, or inventory logs. Additionally, photographs, date-stamped if possible, of existing stockpiles, would further support any documentation provided for determining that wood is pre-Convention.”*

Pipemaker Murray Huggins (Colin Kyo Bagpipes) says, “For those of us importing wood it only means a little more paperwork and a certificate fee.” He adds, “Honestly, I think we've been on CITES II (appendix 2 of the CITES document--see the factsheet illustration for an explanation of the different appendices) a long while now and it's much ado about nothing.”

Charley Kron, of C. E. Kron Bagpipes adds, “The certificate costs about \$50, which is not a big deal on a full set of pipes, but it adds about 20 percent to the cost of a chanter.

For people playing older, pre-Convention sets, you will be able to travel with your pipes as long as you obtain a musician's use certificate through the Fish and Wildlife

Commission.

According to the guitar-oriented website Reverb.com:

For dealers and sellers:

When shipping musical instruments that include any amount (i.e. fingerboard, back, sides, binding) of *Dalbergia* or the other newly regulated woods out of your country as part of a commercial transaction, each one must be accompanied by a CITES re-export certificate.

Even if the instrument was made with *Dalbergia* or the other regulated woods that were acquired before January 2, 2017 - such as a used or vintage instrument - it still must be accompanied by a CITES certificate and marked pre-convention when shipping internationally.

For example, a seller in Nashville looking to ship her 2013 Martin 000-28 with East Indian rosewood back and sides to a buyer in Canada must apply for a re-export certificate, pay the application fee, receive the certificate, and include that document with the guitar when shipping.

For sellers in the United States, **CITES re-export certificates must be applied for through the US Fish and Wildlife Service.** You can download the application [here](#).

According to [WikiVisually.com](#), although the article contains a note saying that citation is needed:

Small growers in Naples, Florida have been successful in growing African blackwood there. Growth habit in Florida yields taller, larger trees, and the rich soil combined with ample nutrients and long growing season yields timber of superior quality at more sustainable rates. Hopefully, ventures like this will be able to take strain off African reserves and allow this timber to be used in the future.



CITES Permits and Certificates

What is CITES and how does it apply to me?

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) protects many species of animals and plants to ensure that commercial demand does not threaten their survival in the wild. It regulates trade in listed species and hybrids, including parts and products, through a system of permits. The Division of Management Authority processes applications for CITES permits for the United States. Under CITES, a species is listed at one of three levels of protection, which have different permit requirements.

regulated.

- Appendix III includes species listed by a range country to obtain international cooperation in controlling trade.

What CITES documents are required?

■ Import

The import of Appendix-I specimens requires both import and export permits. An import permit may be granted when the purpose of the import will not be detrimental to the species' survival, is not primarily commercial, and the importer is suitably equipped to house and care for live animals and plants.

No import permit is required for Appendix-II or -III specimens, or for specimens that qualify for other certificates (see below).

■ Export

The export of Appendix-I and -II specimens requires an export permit. Such a permit may be granted when the export will not be detrimental to the species' survival and specimens were legally acquired.

For Appendix-III species originating from the country that listed it, an export permit is required. An export permit may be granted when the Management Authority determines that the specimens were not obtained in contravention of that country's laws for the protection of animals and plants.

■ Re-export

A re-export certificate is required for the export of CITES-listed specimens that were previously imported, including items subsequently converted to manufactured goods. A certificate may be issued when evidence of legal import has been provided. If you were the original importer of the wildlife or plant, you

need to provide a copy of the canceled CITES permit that accompanied the shipment into the United States and, for animal specimens, the cleared Declaration for Importation (Form 3-177) for that shipment. If you were not the importer, you must provide copies of the importer's documents, as well as documents that show you purchased the wildlife or plant from the original importer, or a record of sequential transactions.



Grey Parrot, CITES Appendix II

- Appendix I includes species presently threatened with extinction that are or may be affected by trade. CITES directs its most stringent controls at activities involving these species.
- Appendix II includes species that are not presently threatened with extinction but may become so if not



Hawksbill Turtle, CITES Appendix I

■ Introduction from the Sea

An introduction from the sea certificate is required for the import of Appendix-I or -II specimens taken on the high seas outside of any country's jurisdiction.

■ Pre-Convention Certificate

If a specimen was obtained prior to the CITES listing date of that species—collected from the wild or held in captivity—it may be granted a pre-Convention certificate that will allow for the specimen to be exported. For Appendix-I specimens, no CITES import permit is required.

■ Bred-in-captivity Certificate or Certificate for Artificially Propagated Plants

If a species meets the criteria for bred-in-captivity or artificially propagated as outlined in CITES resolutions, the exporting country may issue

Matthew Kenrick, CC BY-ND-NC 2.0

an exemption certificate (bred-in-captivity facts sheet is available). For Appendix-I specimens, no CITES import permit is required.

■ **Scientific Exchange Certificate:**

Scientific institutions are eligible for this certificate, which authorizes import and export of museum and herbarium specimens. Such specimens must be shipped as non-commercial loans, donations, or exchanges among scientific institutions registered with CITES.

■ **Certificate of Origin:**

For Appendix-III specimens that originated from a country other than the listing country, a certificate of origin is needed to export the specimen. A certificate can be issued if the specimen was legally obtained within the exporting country.

What about shipping live animals and plants?

Permits for the shipment of CITES-listed live animals or plants may be issued only when the applicant demonstrates that the specimen will be humanely shipped. Live animal shipments must meet the International Air Transport Association (IATA) Live Animals Regulations or the CITES guidelines for transport. In addition, the import of live mammals and birds must meet the humane shipment regulations in 50 CFR Part 14.

What exceptions are there to permit requirements?

■ **In-transit Shipments:**

Under CITES, a shipment transiting a country must be accompanied by a CITES permit from the exporting country to its final destination. The

shipment must remain under Customs bond. Check with other countries involved in the shipment to meet their requirements.

■ **Shipments within the United States:**

CITES imposes no controls on shipments between States or U.S.



territories, including the District of Columbia, Guam, Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, U.S. Virgin Islands, and American Samoa.

■ **Personal or Household Effects:**

The United States recognizes the CITES personal and household effects exemption for wildlife and plants, or their parts and products, when the import or export is part of a household move or accompanying the owner and intended for personal use (does not include specimens mailed or shipped separately). This applies only under the following conditions:

■ Appendix-II and -III specimens may be imported and exported without CITES documents, provided the foreign country does not require a CITES permit.

■ Appendix-I specimens may be exported by a U.S. resident without CITES documents, provided the foreign country does not require a CITES permit. Appendix-I specimens acquired abroad by individuals outside their country of usual residence may not be imported into the United States without CITES permits.

What foreign documentation might I need from a country that is not a member of CITES?

If you are importing CITES-listed wildlife or plants, or their parts and products, from a country that is not a Party (member) to CITES, you must obtain documents that contain all the information normally required by CITES.

How do I apply for a CITES permit or certificate?

1. Complete a standard application form (3-200) and submit it with a processing fee to the Division of Management Authority. Allow at least 60 days for review.
2. Contact your State wildlife or plant conservation agency and the CITES Management Authority of the foreign importing or exporting country to determine any additional requirements. (Visit the CITES Secretariat's website at www.cites.org.)
3. Some CITES-listed species are also protected by other U.S. laws with more stringent permit requirements, i.e., Endangered Species Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, and Wild Bird Conservation Act.

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For more specific information about blackwood conservation, visit www.mpingoconservation.org.



Branch Notes

Metro Branch Report for 2016 AGM

The first meeting of the branch in several years was convened in early October. Support for this meeting was widespread by the membership.

Appointed officers were:

Chair: Joe Brady

Vice chair: Rich Harvey

Recording Secretary: Sean Dalgauer

Support of the branch by the Association at large was acknowledged and welcomed. How to conduct future meetings was discussed and we thought a quarterly “face to face” meeting, which would move around the region, augmented by web based sessions. We will poll the membership for feedback.

We will implement a recruiting program as there are many bands, 40 in a quick count, that should be interested in Association benefits that extend beyond the competitive arena. Also, we’d like to target “non-playing” supporters of our art.

We “jump started” [our Facebook page](#) with some good information and there was immediate positive reaction. There was a discussion concerning the contests in our area and how we may better support them. Again, we plan on polling membership for input.

We also would like to emphasize education and training through workshops. (Lack of local high-quality drumming was discussed.) We considered “pitching” this to the bands for their support on several levels.

Respectfully submitted,
Joe Brady, Chair

Ohio Valley Branch Notes

We wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

The Edinboro Indoor Competition will take place at Edinboro University on April 1st.

The Cincinnati Caledonian Pipe Band will once again hold a solo competition and workshop. The date is April 8, 2017.

Competing at these two indoor events is a great way to get a head start in the Ohio Valley Branch Champion point count. We will post more information on these events as it becomes available.

Please check the [Ohio Valley Branch's Facebook page](#) for up-to-date information on branch events.

Submitted by Andrew Duncan, Chair

Southwest Branch

We don’t really have a whole lot to report for the Southwest Branch. We held our branch AGM via Livestream toward the end of October and had an unusually low turnout. We did put forth a couple of proposals for the association AGM which were approved and passed on. Branch Secretary, John McCain, represented the branch in Baltimore. The end of November saw the return of the competition in conjunction with Celtic Weekend at the Louisiana Renaissance Festival in Hammond. Events were expanded this year to a complete slate of offerings for pipers and drummers on both Saturday and Sunday. The turnout by competitors was very good and the weather was great. There was a pizza party at a local microbrewery on the Friday night before the contest and many of the competitors attended, as well as the judges and a group of other friends. A lot of fun was had by all. This sort of contest is particularly interesting because it exposes competition piping and drumming to a large number of people outside the realm of contests held in conjunction with Highland games. It is also a way to hold contests which are partially subsidized by commercial entities and therefore sustainable. Kudos to Steve and Pam Brownlee for organizing and running the competition and to all the competitors who show up to support it. Happy New Year to all, and don’t forget to check the rule book for some changes to competition requirements in some of the grades. Cheers.



Report for the Executive Secretary

By Sheldon Hamblin

From the Executive Secretary:

Our Annual General Meeting was held on Saturday November 11 and 12th, 2016 at the Holiday Inn, Inner Harbor, Baltimore, Maryland. Attendance was around 50, average for our AGMs. The format was similar to last year with reports being given on Friday night and the proposals addressed on Saturday morning. That left us the afternoon to attend the workshops

Our voting this year was again done by electronic ballots, as many of the branches had been doing for a few years now. We found this very well received and had more people voting than ever.

The results of the elections were that Dan Cole was re-elected to the office of president, Jim Dillahey was re-elected to the office of vice president, Betsy Bethel-McFarland was re-elected to the office of recording secretary and Tom Burnham was elected to the office previously held by Wayne Holscott, officer at large.

On the Proposals see the posting on the home page of the website. As we work on these proposals they will be updated on the website. Most of the proposals were discussed at a joint meeting of the music board and executive committee that took place in Philadelphia on December 2nd and 3rd, 2016.

Regarding mailings from my office: we have moved on to a new emailing program that I am still getting acquainted with. I hope to notify all members of each Voice as it becomes available, as well as using this format for the annual mailing. In combination with moving the Voice to the web, and electronic balloting, we are reaching our goal of spending less on publications/printing/mailing and more on our adjudicators training, and branch events helping our organization increase the level of play for more members.

Upgrades notices were sent to all members I have an email address for. Those who did not receive a requested upgrade should have received a notice from Linda Hall, secretary for the music board.

The Voice has been available on the website now for over a year. As many of you are aware, we have a new website (same address), and new Webmaster. Our programmer has also updated the results pages to make them more user friendly.

The executive committee continues to meet regularly, our next meeting is Monday February 6th, 2017 at 7:30. If you have items for us to consider please advise your branch chair and they will bring it to the meeting.

Respectfully submitted
Sheldon C. Hamblin, Executive Secretary

Actions on the proposals submitted to the floor at the Annual General Meeting of the EUSPBA, 2016

At the 2016 Annual General meeting, a number of proposals were brought forth by the various branches. These proposals were published on the website in their entirety. The following is a synopsis of the proposals and the actions taken at the various committees.

Proposal #1

The Southern Branch requests that the Music Board examine the rules and regulations for pipe band competitions and how they relate to, or differ from, "concert format." We request that rules and guidelines for such "concert formation" contests be provided for the upcoming season. Submitted by Southern Branch, no rationale.

Music Board recommendation: create a rule stating that in concert format pipe band competitions, the location of the judges must remain consistent for every band.

Eastern United States Pipe Band Association

(this was completed and entered into this year's rule book on page 16)

Proposal #2

The Southern Branch proposes that the current prohibition on lower grade band contest challenges be eliminated and such challenges allowed

Music Board recommendation: allow challenges in all grades at the games' discretion. (Same rules as current challenge rules, just for all grades.) Suggest to the games to put a checkbox on their entry form for bands to indicate whether they would challenge if it were offered, that way games' can know how many bands to expect, then they can decide if they have time to offer challenges.

(This change is entered into the rulebook on page 5)

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Proposal #3

Allow players to play in multiple bands – 1-year trial
This was not supported on the floor, but sent to the executive committee for further review. The executive committee believes that the existing rules work well, and allowing members to play in multiple bands could become unmanageable.

The executive committee voted down this proposal.

Proposal #4

Add the following information to the document “EUSPBA Competition Rules and Regulations”: Submitted by the Southwest Branch

“Appropriate Apparel:

Highland dress includes a kilt, dress shirt, tie if you choose, kilt hose, flashes (optional), Ghillie brogues or dress shoes, jacket or vest (optional if it is very hot), rain cape or coat if raining, and Balmoral or glengarry (women may omit in the States; a hat is required in Ontario).”

Wording worked out between the music committee and the executive board is now in the rulebook page 18

“Highland Dress is required and includes a kilt, dress shirt, tie if you choose, kilt hose, flashes (optional), Ghillie brogues or dress shoes, jacket or vest (optional if it is very hot), rain cape or coat if raining, male competitors must wear a hat. (Does not apply to grade 5)”

Proposal #5

Was a duplicate of 2 and withdrawn on the floor

Proposal #6

Require members of EUSPBA member bands to become individual members of the EUSPBA, adjusting the fee schedule as appropriate. Submitted by the Southwest Branch
The executive committee could not reach consensus on this issue, but modified it to require email addresses on band rosters so that all band members would receive the emails sent by the association. This new form has been sent to the Webmaster.

Proposal #7

The EUSPBA shall submit a proposed set of guidelines for Games which would allow for an expedited entry, performance, and exit of Massed Bands during Games Opening Ceremony events.” Submitted by the Southern Branch
Sent to the executive committee, the executive committee referred it to the visioning session.

Proposal #8

Update the Branch Guidelines to rename the branch Treasurer position to Vice-Chair

This was sent to the executive committee. The executive committee’s decision was that the branch guidelines will be revised to reflect the positions of Chair, Secretary, and Member at Large.

Proposal #9

Update the by-laws to allow for referendum ballots for the membership.

This was sent to the executive committee without support from the floor.

The executive committee felt this had no merit and did not support it.

Proposal #10

Update the “Rules and Requirements Governing Pipe Band Competition - Band member requirements” section of the competition rules to include the following:

(red is new suggestion)

*Bands not meeting the minimum number of players may, at the discretion of the games, be permitted to play for comments only, and will not be scored or given a placing in the contest. **If a band is in this situation, they are encouraged to compete.”**

This was withdrawn on the floor.

Proposal #11

Form a committee to initiate a discussion with our members about “What is the purpose of the branches?” At a minimum, this committee should include the branch officers and some exec ones, too.

This was sent to the executive committee. Brendan O’Reilly offered to head up a committee.

Proposal #12

The Southern Branch requests that the Music Board explore the option of putting “qualitative analysis” relative to grade level back on all score sheets. Submitted by Southern Branch,
Sent to the music board.

This will be put into new sheets as they are printed.

Proposal #13

EUSPBA organize and fund a “concert” series at the end of the competition season to showcase the top talent of our association. **Sent to the executive committee.**

The executive committee tabled this for the moment, but will apply it to the visioning sessions in the future.



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