

# Monterey Bay Pipe Band

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## A Rainy Scratch

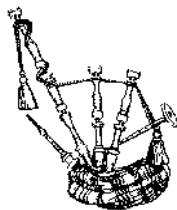
What's Happening to the Band?

Whatever happened to the "sunny skies" of Southern California? A streak of bad luck dealt the band a disappointing blow and what seemed like the start of another successful season abruptly ended on a fateful rainy Saturday.

The scene: The San Diego Scottish Highland Games, Vista, California. The actual scene: a soupy fog hanging endlessly over Brengle Park. What seemed like a pleasant mist materialized into a moderate rain as, one by one, everyone discovered that its first day of competition was non-existent. Without enough pipers the band had to scratch and play for critique only. Of course, the Medley set was played better than its ever been played in a competition setting and it must have been a sure winner.

After an unsuccessful Saturday even struggle to find a lost piper the band was again forced to scratch. And, as fate would have it, the March Medley was too played very well.

Moral of the story: Keep a third eye on the pipers, you never know when they'll disappear. Here's to the champions of the scratched competition!



## ROBERT P. WATWOOD THE CHIEFTAN

I first met Bob Watwood at a party thrown by the First Salinas Valley Highlanders pipe band after the nighttime parade Saturday of Rodeo Week in Salinas, July 1967. I was brand new in Salinas and had been invited by Charlie MacGlashan, a fellow eye surgeon and piper in the band. The party featured our band and also the Black Ravens pipe band from San Francisco and the Lockheed pipe band. There was feasting, drinking, laughing, dancing, toasting, and general merriment, with Bob reigning over all. I was hooked and wanted to be part of the group immediately.

It's a great marvel to me how Bob and a friend, Robert Martin, ever conceived that they could create a pipe band in a location there was absolutely no tradition of Scottish music, out of nothing but an idea. When I think about the fragility of keeping an existing band going these days, with Prima Dona pipers and drummers who change bands if they get upset with something, I have to give thanks that Bob had no fear about undertaking the creation of the Highlanders. The legend is that Watwood and Martin met in the spring of 1962 at the Italian Villa, a long vanished watering hole on Highway 68, and got to trading stories about being stationed in England during the Second World War. Both were tremendously impressed with the British regiments, and especially the Scots with their pipers. They thought, "Wouldn't it be great to have our own pipe band?" This with absolutely no musical training or exposure to anyone who could play the pipes!

In those days, life was simpler; on the strength of Bob Watwood's word a local bank lent the needed money to send to Scotland for pipes and the uniforms we wore. The band was to wear the Military set of the Mackenzie tartan, patterned after the Seaforth Highland Regiment, which exists now, like the First Salinas Valley Highlanders, only in the memories of those who served in the ranks.

No one in Monterey County could instruct the band in either piping or drumming, and it was a case of just looking at the "Edinburgh College of Piping Tutor, Book 1" and thrashing away at it. I remember being shown how to make the "high A" improperly, by closing the stop under the middle finger of the left hand instead of the ring finger. (Continued on next page)

## WELCOME NEWBIES

The band would like to welcome bagpipers Tobias Marks and Tess Hendle-Doying. Tobias competed in his first competition at the Campbell Highland Games while Tess participated in her first Massed Bands. Congratulations to you both, the band is happy to have you as its newest members.

The drum corps would like to give a formal welcome to Gloria Cardenas as its new lead stroke. She comes to the band with many years of experience and was a welcome addition to both the corps and the band.

## Slowly Healing From San Diego

The band is slowly recovering from its disastrous implosion at the San Diego games. What better venue to begin the healing process than the Campbell Highland games, held a weekend later. The band took 3<sup>rd</sup> in each set and is slowly making its way to a full recovery.

## Hey, Look! We're in the Newspaper!

Isn't it always pleasantly surprising to flip open the pages of the local newspaper and see yourself staring back, immortalized in black and white? Even better--to walk down the street and have someone recognize you, someone you don't even know? In the last six months, the band has gained a very important member. Wendy Brickman, the owner and operator of Brickman Associates, a local advertising and public relations company, has taken on the difficult task of promoting the band through both the media and local gigs. Highly dedicated to the work she does for the band, she has helped the band achieve some major steps in the process of becoming more recognized on the peninsula.

Just a few weeks ago the band appeared, with picture and all, twice in the Californian for victories at the Costa Mesa games and various other achievements. Ms. Brickman has also helped the band line up important gigs at local pub, restaurants, festivals and events which aid in both the public relation and fund-raising aspects.

## Costa Mesa conquered

After many years of unsuccessful attempts at placing well for both days of competition, the band has finally conquered the beast.. Held in late May, the 72<sup>nd</sup> Annual Scottish Festival (Orange County Fairgrounds, Costa Mesa) couldn't have been better. Surrounded by premier bands, nice weather and excited spectators, the scene was set for a dream-like victory to come true. The results of Saturday's March Medley competition were spectacular. Having won first place for the set, the band was awarded the monstrous Kevin R. Blandford Memorial Trophy. Sunday's Medley competition was just as successful as the band took second place for the set. The results of the weekend were far beyond what anyone could have expected, so congratulations to everyone on a job well done.

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And when wearing the kilt of the Seaforth Regiment, keep it always in mind that we have borrowed it and must wear it with PRIDE!"

P.M. Emeritus

July 4, 2004

Still pressing on,

Spence Myers

The first "Assault" of the band was the parade at San Juan Bautista, in the spring of 1963. Thereafter all members who made that gig were entitled to wear the "Red Hackle" in their Glengarry bonnets.

This honor was rendered to each subsequent Pipe Major, as he hands over the sash to his successor These sorts of regimental traditions have vanished from the band now, as has much else.

For many years the band marched in the "Mother Lode Roundup" parade in Sonora, California, on the Saturday of Mother's Day weekend. The band always took about 30 minutes to march up the parade route to the little red church, then 3 or 4 hours to march back down the same route, through all the bars while we played for beers. Ask any old Highlander about the weekend, which culminated by Bob Watwood mixing Ramos Fizzes in the sunroom at the Gunn House Hotel on Sunday morning.

Bob was the first Pipe Major of the band and I was honored to take the sash from him in 1972 and to lead the band until 1977. He continued to play and to support the band, and was always the wise head who advised us on personnel matters, as well as so much else.

Bob recently was able to come to the photo session that the Monterey Bay Pipe Band had to take the picture for the cover of the Monterey Highland Games. Actually, he missed the photo shoot, but made the gathering in the cocktail lounge, where I was honored to buy him bourbon and to look at some old band photos from days gone by with him. He was much diminished in later years by a neurological disease, but still had the twinkle in his eye.

When I spoke of his death to the daughter of a tenor drummer from the old Highlanders, Alyce Kinn, she said, "Bob Watwood - what a force!" Indeed. All who now enjoy the making of traditional Scots music in Monterey County can thank Bob Watwood, and raise a glass to him and to what he began here.

Bob will have a memorial service at the Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd out in Corral de Tierra on Saturday morning, August 14. Bob was one of the founding members of that church. He specifically asked for a full-on presence of pipes and drums on that occasion. I believe the time may be at 10:30 in the morning, but by the Monterey Games on the previous weekend, we should know for certain the time.

Thank you, Bob, for the fun and camaraderie you have allowed all of us to have over the years with the Highlanders and with the descendants of that group. In the frontispiece to the First Salinas Valley Highlanders' Piob Mor settings, Bob wrote:

"It is hoped that those who follow in the steps of the previous Salinas Highlanders will truly 'Press on Regardless' and may their music and drum speak for itself; (continue on left column)