

<u>Page 44 - The Bagpipe in Cape Breton: From a Conversation with Barry Shears,</u> Piper

ISSUE: <u>Issue 52</u>

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1989/8/1

who's an old piper in Syd? ney, told me that there was a Mrs. MacMillan who lived out in Glen Morri? son. And she came up to him one day and said, "Do you know this tune?" And she sang a pibroch from start to finish--"The Fin? ger-Lock" ("An Glas Mheur") which is probably one of the more difficult tunes ever written, one of the more difficult pi- brochs ever written. And she told him that she used to use some of the varia? tions to sing the kids to sleep.... I use it myself to sing the kids to sleep. You know, it gets back to this whole pipe-band thing. That's the problem with pipe bands. Although they offer people that learn to play the pipes some sort of or? ganization where they can get together with other pipers and drummers and play march tunes, pibroch is strictly a solo form of music, and you don't play it in a band. Another problem with bands is they only usually have 15 or 20 tunes in their repertoire. "Green Hills of Tyrol" and this romantic type of pipe music. And real fil%ip''%' u'. Barry Shears holds an example from the Angus J. MacNeil Manuscript of pipe tunes crowd-pleasers, I suppose. They do "Amaz? ing Grace" and stuff like that. Which is so far removed from the great tunes that we have. We should have some of the best pipers in the world here, but we don't, which is something that--you know, here we are, the descendants of the Gael, children of the Gael, living in Cape Breton. Donald MacLeod, who is a famous piper in Scot? land, had maintained that the Western Isles produced the best pipers. And we are largely descended from a lot of people from the Western Isles. Really, there's only one person around in Cape Breton now that can teach pibroch, and that's Dr. An-Real Estate & Insurance "If you're thinking of selling your home, give us a call." Serving Industrial Cape Breton and North Victoria R. Hickey & Co. p. O. Box 96, North Sydney B2A 3M1 Gerald Brennan, Mgr. Residence: 794-4564 "And remember: No sale, no charge." 794-3119 Keddy's Sydney Hotel 600 King's Rd., Sydney, N. S. KEDDY'S 218 ROOMS Air Conditioned Colour Cable TV Licensed Dining Daily Features Restaurant Hours: 7 A.M. - 2 P.M. / 5 P.M. -10 P.M. Coffee Shop Hours: 6 A.M.-MIDNIGHT Featuring Our Indoor Recreation Facility - '*Pool ?> Sauna ?? Whirlpool Bath