



Fort William enjoyed a lovely summer of good weather and this helped boost the fund raising efforts at our twice-weekly performances in Cameron Square, Fort William.

This is a central point in the town's High Street and the band has been involved in the consultations with the local authority over planned redevelopment of the site. It is hoped that planned improvements will enhance the square and in turn help attract and retain audiences.

A small band of parents helped share the responsibility of carrying the collecting cans and hopefully this can continue with more volunteers willing to give up a little time for this endeavour. Our High Street performances continue to be our main source of income.

Throughout the summer, Donald Wallace again gave a commentary on the bands music repertoire and history in between the sets that were performed and local business, the Sweetness Shop, showed their support for the band



by storing and putting out the band's A-board street sign on a Tuesday and Thursday morning. Furthermore, they made the band their nominated local charity and have begun collecting money for band funds in the shop. Well done and many thanks to them!

The ethos of the band since its inception has been one of inclusiveness, even before such a word was in common parlance. By funding band equipment, uniforms and other costs we can truly say that financial pressures are no barrier to joining and participating in the pipe band. However, membership is only open to those who have moved on to pipes at a basic level. While membership has started to increase with 5 new pipers and 1 new snare drummer, it is however unlikely that membership

will see a return to its high numbers of a 35+ squad. The introduction of higher school music tuition fees by The Highland Council (the main route for entry into the band) combined with the existence of two other town pipe bands actively recruiting school age pupils means that recruiting and retaining our membership is difficult but of vital importance. Many of our pipers are reluctant to participate in solo piping competitions and in recent years most have found this a negative experience and so the band sees one of its key functions as providing positive and rewarding performing experiences. One such opportunity, playing with St John's College Pipe Band, all the way from Harare, Zimbabwe in August 2013 unfortunately had to be cancelled. However, the band has other planned opportunities to perform with others and next summer a band from Canada will join us at one of our High Street performance. Whilst playing at Arisaig



and Mallaig and Morar Highland games are very much part of our annual calendar many of the band members enjoy the experience that other

more seasoned players take for granted. The pageantry and



spectacle at being the centre of attention of a large crowd can be exhilarating, especially for young band members.

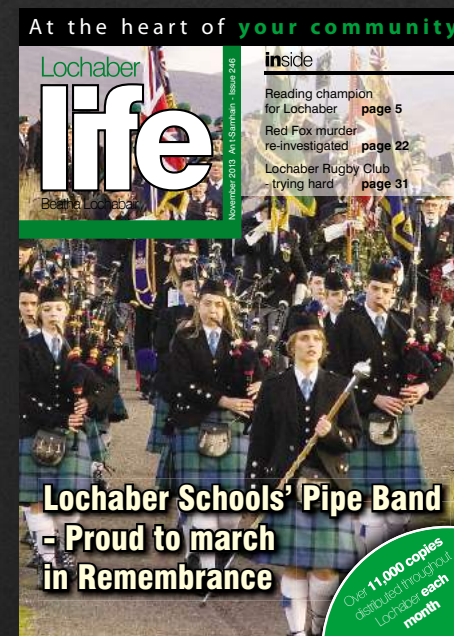
Margaret MacMaster, our piping tutor and band leader, took an untimely fall during July, which resulted in her breaking her ankle. Thankfully drumming tutor and former Pipe Major Carolyn McKee was home for the summer



and by juggling her job commitments was able to ensure that LSPB was able to meet its scheduled performances. In fact only one High Street performance was missed and that was due to inclement weather. We thank Carolyn for fulfilling the role of band leader at this time otherwise three important local summer events would have been left disappointed. Carolyn will



continue to give drumming tuition as and when she can. The lack of access to a permanent drumming tutor makes it more challenging to bring forward new drummers to the corps. Carolyn also wrote a well-received article about the bands association with the Commando Veterans Association at Lochaber's Remembrance parades in fact it led to a cover photo in Lochaber Life a magazine reaching into 11,000 homes. A good PR effort for the band, Carolyn! It was also nice to receive a donation to band funds from No 9 Commando Old Comrades.



Margaret was fit enough to re join the band at the Ben Nevis Race Prize Giving ceremony. Her recovery time was thankfully short and the lack of marching at this event was an added bonus!

The band committee took the decision to replace the bagpipe covers as some were showing signs of wear and tear. The

most cost effective supplier is based in Canada and while this presents additional problems with regard to payment, the results were well worth it.

All pipers were issued with the new covers in time for our

Remembrance performances in November. We changed the dominant colour to black but retained the same colour and font for the band



lettering. This improves the overall look of the uniform as the band switched to black socks in 2010 and the covers tie in better with this. This year was the 25th Anniversary of the establishment of Lochaber Housing Association and we were delighted to receive £200 as part of their social enterprise community give back scheme. This was used to purchase a new base harness.

The band continued to play at a high number of events. The season always kicks off with the Pre'65 Trials in Kinlochleven. Unfortunately this event had to be cancelled by the organisers because of the poor weather conditions. Nevertheless, they wanted the band to come and entertain the many

disappointed riders, who had travelled from all over the UK and Europe. This is



always a good event for new recruits to begin their band career and this year

there were five playing at this event.

CM December 2013