



GORDON DUNCAN
MEMORIAL TRUST



The Board of Trustees
Annual Report and Accounts
January 1st 2024 to December 31st 2024
(Year 18)

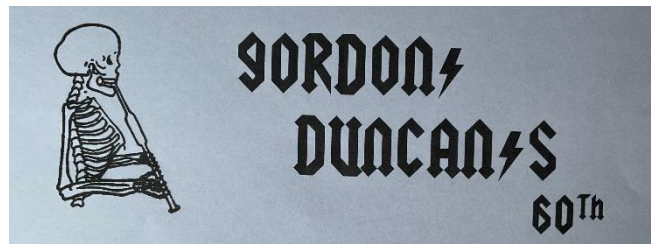
CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I present this Annual Report on the activities of the Gordon Duncan Memorial Trust for 2024.

This year would have been Gordon's 60th birthday and the



GDM Trust decided to



celebrate it as Gordon himself would have - with a superb evening of music and chat by Gordon's family and friends' in 'The Sally', in Perth on Friday 10th May.



My own special surprise for this year was being presented with the Balvenie Medal, at the Glenfiddich Piping Championships at Blair Castle. A unique afternoon and evening.

Thank you, again, to all the Trustees and all who have supported the Trust in 2024 and we look forward to more new adventures in 2025,



Ian Duncan, Chair

DONATIONS gratefully received in 2024 came to a total of **£14,645.05**. Special thanks to the Logan Charitable Trust, The Charities Trust, the family of Greg Whyte (in his memory), Bill Urquhart and Pete Ianetta with donations of £11,414.45. The remaining £3,230.60 came from online donations via PayPal, of which most came from John Spivey with our grateful thanks.

OVERALL SPONSORSHIP TO DATE: This year the GDMT made a total of twenty-three Sponsorship Awards. A wonderful mixture of recipients received awards this year. A total of **£22,148.90** was awarded by the GDMT in 2024. The GDMT was set up in 2006 and since 2008 we have now sponsored 205 groups and individuals to the total amount of just over **£148,841.50** to date.

MERCHANDISE SPONSORSHIP came to £1178.70 this year. Most of this was for prizes for the junior competitions in Pitlochry, Lewis & Harris and the Young Piper of the Year 2024. We also supported the Wheel of Fortune Competition, the Gordon Duncan Memorial Solo Competition and some other more minor events.

AWARDS & SPONSORSHIPS made by the GDMT in 2004: -

- **Jai Blackhurst**- a 15year old piper who started learning in 2018, and who played in a Grade 3A pipe band for the first time in 2023. This year Jai was awarded the “Alex Duncan Memorial Trophy” for the EPIC Values of Character, Commitment and Ability. Jai also plays drums, keyboard and guitar, though pipes always come first!
- **EPIC East Ayrshire Music**- started teaching in 2018 where there had been none for 10 years. The Covid pandemic was hard on learners so EPIC had to start over almost from scratch again and now teach 150+ students each year. They now have a community pipe band and in August 2023 recorded a live album from their EPIC New Dawn Concert celebrating their 5th anniversary. This year they intend to start competing.
- **Kilmarnock Pipe Band**- the current leaders took over in 2018 and the pipe band achieved promotion from Grade 4A to Grade 3B, however they have decided to regroup to Grade 4B and focus the band on the young players and to inspire them to compete
- **Arran Music School**- is all about the tuition of piping and drumming to 100+ pupils on the Isle of Arran. As well as performing at many events across the Island they have now competed at several competitions including the SSPDT Championships, British, Scottish & World Pipe Band Championships. This project also won the BBC Na Trads Community Project of the Year 2021. (*Which was sponsored by the GDMT that year.*)
- **Donald MacLeod Memorial Competition**- this year, for the first time, the Junior Pipe Major Donald MacLeod MBE Memorial Competition was held on the 4th April in Stornoway. Eight junior pipers from the Western Isles were invited to

compete. They each played Piobaireachd, March, Strathspey and Reel and Hornpipe & Jig Competitions. The overall winner was Eilidh MacDonald.



The top professional pipers competed on the Friday 5th April and after a day of wonderful music, the overall winner was Ally Henderson. An evening of more wonderful piping continued in the evening.



- **Lewis Pipe Band-** is the oldest community organisation on the Isle of Lewis. Although it was formed in 1904, the Band's first competition was in 2007. Since 2012 the Band began their journey playing at 1 or 2 Pipe Band Championships each year and rising from Grade 4B to Grade 3A, winning the Cowal (4A) and European Championships (3A) along the way. The Band has always supported youth development on the Islands and supports the Lewis & Harris Youth Pipe Band with a view to welcoming those players in to the Lewis Pipe Band in time and as a group for support and fellowship.
- **Bobby Allen-** we continue to support Bobby as he has progressed from a junior piper up the ranks to a solo competitive piper with the "Competing Pipers Association". Bobby is also working his way to a Degree in Piping at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.
- **Dunkeld and Birnam Traditional Music Group-**the amazing tutors in this group, which only began in 2023, have most of the young folk who just started playing instruments then, now playing in their bands. They have held 2 concerts for friends and family, performed at DDSRS's annual concert and the Neil Gow Festival. The tuition started mainly for fiddle and accordion and they now aim to give tuition in traditional guitar, percussion and whistle.
- **Finlay MacDonald-** has been composing music for over 30 years, influenced by his life in the piping and folk music scene in Scotland and beyond. Since graduating from the RSCAMD Finlay has worked continuously as a musician, teacher and composer. This year Finlay finally published his own compositions as "The Crofthead Collection"
- **Tam Barnes Drumming-** Tam is a drumming tutor in the South West of Scotland and wishes to continue to do this. To help with this he wants to create a tutor book for pipe band drummers to help them learn initially to then progress through their drumming careers.
- **Strathmore Schools Pipe Band-** this pipe band is made up from young people aged 10 to 18 years, in Blairgowrie and its surrounding rural towns. Tutors visit ten rural schools where young people receive small group lessons during the school day. All participants meet one evening a week at Blairgowrie High School for a full band practice. They are now beginning to play at events and competitions
- **Lewis & Harris Youth Pipe Band-** was formed in 2018 as an organisation dedicated to the development and advancement of pipe bands amongst the school aged youth of these Islands. Since its inception they have progressed to finally being able to compete at the SSPDT Championships and the European and World Pipe Band Championships in 2023. At the SSPDT Championships this year (2024) both bands received brilliant performance critiques and one received a top 6 finish. The cost of travel and subsistence to get to these competitions is a challenge which the GDMT helped with.
- **Hamish Moore for The Raasay Competition-** Hamish set up this new unique invitational piping competition set on the Island of Raasay; the Raasay Piping Competition. The aim is to reconnect piping and the Gaelic Culture, to reclaim our music's original connection with its roots. Twelve top pipers were invited and the



Angus Nicholson, winner of the 2024 Raasay Piping Competition. [Photo Cailleán MacLean]

following competed; James Duncan MacKenzie, Angus Nicholson, Michael Grey, Hector Henderson, Decker Forrest, Lorne Cousin, Duncan Nicholson, Ben Duncan, Ailis Sutherland, Michael Steele and Ciar Milne.

The results of this new competition were; 1st Angus Nicholson, Fort William, 2nd

Ailis Sutherland, Kirriemuir, 3rd Decker Forrest, Isleornsay.

- **Celtic Arts Foundation (USA)**- is a non-profit organisation based in Mount



Gary West (left) presents the Gordon Duncan Memorial trophy to Craig Sutherland.

Vernon, Washington State, USA, and their mission is to ‘sponsor, encourage and promote Celtic culture through events and educational activities’ Their two biggest annual events are the CAF Winter School and the Skagit Valley Highland Games. In this, their 28th year, they wanted to create the Gordon Duncan Memorial Kitchen Piping Competition, a new solo piping competition at the Skagit Valley Highland Games to honour the legacy and music of Gordon Duncan.

The winner of the first competition was Craig Sutherland, Perth, Scotland, 2nd Zephan Knichel, 3rd Cameron Bonar, 4th Alastair Lee, all from Surrey, British Columbia.

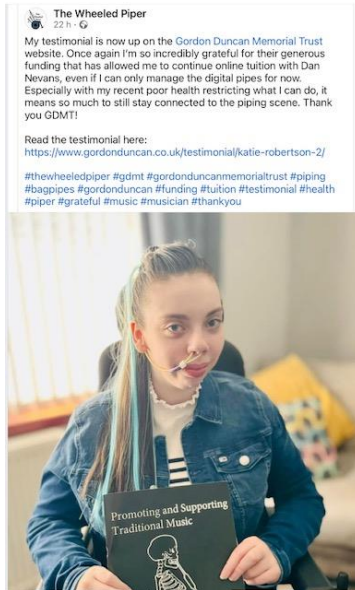
- **Annabel Charlton**- started playing at age 6 and is now competing with a Grade 3A pipe band as well as competing successfully at solo piping competitions and Highland Games. Annabel is also a skilled pianist and just heading to study for a Bachelor of Music degree at Aberdeen University.
- **National Piping Centre (To hold the Gordon Duncan Memorial Solo Competition)**- this year our four competitors were Tristan Jarry from Brittany, Scott Wallace from Ireland, Eireann Ianetta-MacKay from Scotland and Matt MacIsaac representing the ‘rest of World’. After a wonderful afternoon of piping the overall winner was Matt MacIsaac.



- **Craig Muirhead-** Craig after being inundated for requests to arrange rock, pop and party piece songs for the bagpipes, he started to compile a collection of songs which fit on the limited scale of the Great Highland Bagpipe. And so, his book “Arranged” was written. The GDMT sponsored this book as the book sponsored the GDMT!
“Arranged” was such a success that “Arranged for Christmas”, a book of arrangements featuring classic Christmas hymns and carols for pipers of all ages, bands and ensembles for years to come was created.
- **Duncan MacDonald-** Duncan is a Scottish Traveller, a piper and a ballad singer, the singing being something that has been passed down through generations. He is recording an album of traditional Scottish Ballads and with an aim to do more projects with the pipes and releasing a book of tunes.
- **SSPDT-The Scottish Schools Pipes and Drums Trust** hold the Scottish Schools Pipe Band Championships which was held in Kilmarnock on the 10th March 2024 with 99 schools competing, 98 of them Scottish schools. There are competitions for all stages of ability. The GDMT sponsored the “Freestyle Competition”, an innovative competition which sees school pipe bands joining forces with other instrumentalists and vocalists too sometimes. It shows great versatility of ability, skill and imagination of the young players. A real challenge to the judges! A very, very special competition and a great day watching happy, young people enjoying playing their music. The winner of the Freestyle Competition 2024 was Renfrewshire Schools ‘A’, 2nd was West Lothian Schools and 3rd Sgoil Bhagh a Chaisteil.
- **NPC Charity Ball-** The National Piping Centre is a charity which does so much for all kinds of piping and as funding has become more difficult these last few years, they decided to remind us all that it was a charity and could do more with a bit of assistance. So, some of the GDMT Trustees decided to support the NPC with an award- and also had a wonderful evening of music and craic, all dressed up for a change!
- **Sydney Charles-** Sydney is a young piper from Leicestershire, a third-generation piper, who competes at solo competitions and has tuition from one of the National Piping Centre tutors.



- **Katie Robertson-** Katie, also The Wheeled Piper, has achieved so much in the last three and a half years since she started piping. Despite multiple health problems



Katie has learnt to pipe and loves it. The GDMT continues to support Katie with her tuition from Dan Nevans at the National Piping Centre.



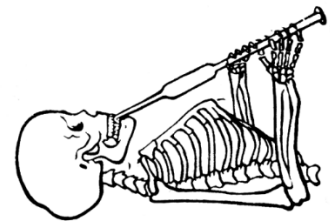
The Wheeled Piper

PLEASE SEE OUR WEBSITE AT www.gordonduncan.co.uk FOR THE FEEDBACK AND TESTIMONIALS OF THE RECIPIENTS.

GDMT WEBSITE

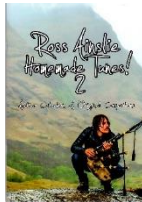
Our website is full of information on what we do each year with a huge amount of historical detail, photos and recordings. We recently added a little explanation of our logo. The history of the skeleton logo which was fun; not spooky!

Thank you to Sian for keeping the GDMT up to date on social media.



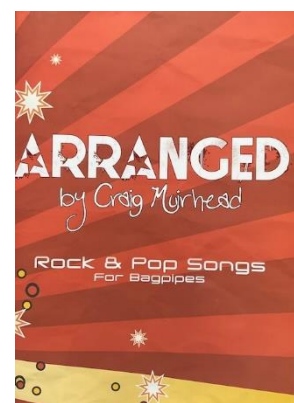
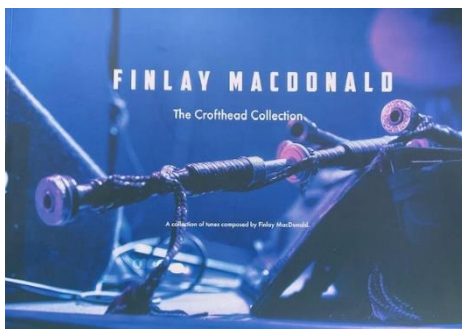
TUNE BOOKS

Our best sellers are still Gordon Duncan's Tunes Books 1 and 2.



This year we sponsored three tune books: Finlay MacDonald's "The Crofthead Collection", a collection of tunes composed by Finlay himself over many years and finally gathered into this great tune book.

The GDMT also helped Craig Muirhead, in exchange for some advertising, to get some more copies of his "Arranged" out there; a tune book of arrangements of rock, pop and party-piece songs for the bagpipes. Also, Craig's "Arranged for Christmas". All three available from our website now.



Our AGM was held on the 5th March 2024. Showing off two new banners for the GDMT.



SO, TO THE FUTURE

The GDMT are sponsoring a new Junior Competition which will be held the morning before the Ardmore Cup Competition, which will be held on the 22nd February.

The Scottish Schools Pipes and Drums Trust are holding their great competitions again in Kilmarnock on the 9th March 2025 and the GDMT take great delight in sponsoring their fabulous 'Freestyle Competition'.

The Pipe Major Donald MacLeod Memorial Competitions will be held on the 27th March (the invitational Junior Competition) and the senior invitational competition on the Friday the 28th March 2025.

Three top class competitions for young players, two of them following on from top class invitational senior competitions where the young folk can hear the top pipers of this era.

Finally for our 2024 Annual Report- not quite Gordon Duncan; his Dad, Jock Duncan!

On the 17th March 2024 at the Cowdray Hall in Aberdeen, a new book “Jock Duncan- the Man and his Songs” was launched. The book written by the folklorist, singer and musician Pete Shephard was launched at a wonderful concert of bothy ballad singing to celebrate the life and songs of the traditional singer, Jock Duncan. As well as the book about Jock a double CD of Jock singing these traditional ballads called “Aikey Brae to Ythanside” and a re-release of Jock’s “Ye Shine Whar Ye Stan!” became part of our online shop.

