
THE MACE



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DM Spotlight: Billy Jordan

William "Billy" Jordan, Drum Major of the Dumbarton and District Pipe Band (Scotland), is a well known and respected Drum Major and instructor worldwide, placing second in the 2004 World Championships in Glasgow. The RDMA Newsletter staff had an opportunity to catch up with Bill recently and filed this report:

RDMA: What in your background that brought you into Drum Majoring; and what is the length of experience?

WJ: I started in pipe bands when I was 10 years old with (novice/juvenile) Dumbarton and District in 1978 as a side drummer. I then went on to play tenor and bass in the juvenile band of Dumbarton and District along with my sister, Lynn, who was a piper during this first year in the band. I was hooked on the Drum Majors and started lessons with William Lafferty, who taught a lot of young up and coming Drum Majors. I had my first juvenile contest in the summer of 1980 and kept doing both drumming and Drum Majoring, as well as moving up to the Grade 3 Dumbarton and District band playing tenor. I continued to do this until 1987 when I joined The First Battalion, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, with the goal of being Drum Major and leading the Edinburgh Military Tattoo, which I achieved. I left the First Battalion, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders in the summer of 2001 and returned back to Dumbarton and District Grade 2, and have remained there ever since teaching all over the world with two young kids in our novice/juvenile band ranked 2nd and 4th on the novice/juvenile Drum Major's champion of champions board of the world for 2004. I myself have finished second overall on the champion of champion board of the world for 2004, taking second at the Scottish championships, fourth at the British championships, second at the world championships, and fourth at the Cowal championships; so this has been a good year for me and I hope next year will be better.

RDMA: Tell us about your worst competition experience...

WJ: The worst contest for me was at Annan, in the Scottish Borders in 1999, when just after I had competed with my Drum Corps I was warming up for the D/M's contest. I bust my nose when the sun was in my eyes as the Judge shouted, "By the right, quick, march!", I was seeing three maces coming back down and finished a full length past the band but luckily, I did not place last.

(Billy Jordan, continued)

RDMA: Do you see any differences in how competitions are conducted; how drum majors compete (currently vs. your initial foray into the field)?

WJ: The contests now are run more evenly across the board, with most Judges following the same set of rules. Standards are a lot higher now than when I started across the world, which is good to see. When I started there were more D/M's wearing No. 1 dress, which you don't see as much. Today everyone wears black Argyll Jackets and waist coats with white hose and a day sporran...but now I spend about one hour get my uniform just right before a small contest and about two hours before a championship because one point can win the contest for you.

RDMA: What is your musical background?

WJ: I have been drumming from the age of ten, and keep drumming today. I have attended the Army School of Pipe Band Drumming and have taken RSPBA exams as well. I was also the silver bugler of the First Battalion Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders for a number of years.

RDMA: What is/are your favorite band recordings?

WJ: My favorite Pipe band recording is, "The Bells of Dumblane", by PM R. Mathison of Shotts.

[Editors Note: Bill Jordan will be coming to the US during the month of April to conduct drum majoring workshops; one taking place in New York State, and one taking place in Connecticut. If interested in attending, contact Patti Nisco (drm-maj@msn.com), or 'Ox' Gara

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RDMA in EUSPBA

*DM Chuck Kaba
St. Brendan's Pipes & Drums*

Arriving at one of last year's games, here on the east coast, the visiting drum major would find a welcomed oasis amidst a cacophony of noise and drum reverberations. This respite is known simply as The Drum Major's Tent. It's easily identifiable by the Association scroll hanging from wrought iron post and placard on the vehicle. Upon further inspection will be seen drum majors of all sizes, shapes, and gender, enjoying the company of each other. Entrance into the tent is by way of food and beverage offerings, which is shared by all.

Prior to competition, a review is conducted mutually where all present their technique for assessment and critique. A uniform pre-inspection is carried out by a close friend or member of the family, to ensure an inadvertent slip or displacement of uniform items is addressed (competition is steep). This mutual assistance has made for much tighter competition, forcing the judge to rely upon his wealth of knowledge.

Relaxing after the competition is a lively event: Drum Majors sit and enjoy refreshments, and the stories begin! If you sit long enough, you'll be treated to war stories of the more seasoned DM's, hear tales of old, and be delighted at the display of camaraderie amongst all. Good natured ribbing between competitors ensues and long standing gags are remembered. There is no rush to go anywhere; the day's biggest challenge is behind you. Amidst all of this fun, news abounds: who is where these days, the latest on a mace, demonstration of technique, and information is shared. Old friends re-connect, new ones are made, and the day is full of memories. The next time you are competing in an EUSPBA-sanctioned event, look for us!



RDMA members M. Baile (third from left); O. Gara (fifth from left); and C. Kaba (white tunic) enjoy the day with Re-enactor friends at the 2004 Altamont Games.

Deep River: Ancient Fife and Drum Muster

It's known as the world's largest fife and drum muster. Held the third weekend in July each year, the Deep River Ancient Fife and Drum Muster attracts thousands of fans and lovers of ancient music.

Hosted in Deep River, Connecticut, the muster gained prominence in the 1950's when a revival in fife and drum flourished. Since then, it's become the largest event of its kind in the world.

Each year, the muster attracts fife and drum corps from around the globe, who join together on Friday night and reluctantly say good-bye Sunday afternoon. There in excess of seventy-five corps who participate in the weekend-long event. Friday nights' tattoo kicks off at 7 pm on Devitt Field, and is followed by a jam session, where fifers and drummers join together on the field to play tunes together. There is nothing in the world like standing on a field and playing a round of tunes with a few hundred other musicians playing common tunes!

The muster itself takes place on Saturday afternoon, following a parade. Last summer had a total of eighty-eight bands march. Eighty-seven of the bands were fife and drum corps, and one pipe band (Taggert). Of course, with Taggert hailing from Deep River, the chance to join their musical brethren offered little option.

As with Drum Majors of any genre, bands with a Drum Major lead their groups with a variety of style and deportment. The gear used varies as well, with the three most obvious choices being the standard mace, signal baton, or espontoon. Uniforms are military and civilian, representing time periods from Early American to present day. Although the commands can vary, the Drum Major's effect is the same...their presence command attention for and by the band they lead.

For any lover of good music...the kind which stirs within your soul when it's played; that conveys a history, passion and deep roots, a trip to the Deep River Ancient Muster is highly recommended.



South American Pipe Band Releases CD of First Gathering

DM Richard Empson
Riverside Pipe Band

Highlighted in the September 2004 issue, the music from the First South American Pipe Band Gathering, has been compiled into all the best of the nearly five hours of music played at the event, held in April 2004, into a **double CD**. All seven participating bands are included, as are overseas soloists **Pipe Major Robert Mathieson** and **Dr. Angus MacDonald**.

The CD is the means to commemorate an event as unique as it was interesting. The First South American Pipe Band Gathering was a landmark for piping in South America and, indeed, the world. Though the number and quality of the participants (Robert and Angus excluded) may belie its significance, by managing to bring together for the first time ever all the continent's existing pipe bands and most of its solo pipers, this was a truly historical event. To carry out this event many hurdles were overcome: the lack of prior contact between many of the participants, the regional economic shortcomings and the vast distances many were forced to travel, just to name a few.

This CD is a **limited edition**; orders are first-come-first-served. The **price of the double CD is US \$20** (S/H charges are additional).

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<http://www.riversidepipeband.com>

RDMA PIPE BAND DRILL MANUAL SNEAK PREVIEW

V. DRILL AT THE HALT

A. FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS

Introduction

This manual will describe the UK and Canadian style of foot drill. While the visual and mechanical drill of the two countries is very similar, the timing of the words of command vary considerably when on parade. For those bands adopting the traditional UK foot drill, it must be noted that the timing of vocal commands varies from mace commands. Care must be taken to teach both to your band. The timing of Canadian words of command is generally similar to that of the appropriate mace command.

Vocal commands along with mace and hand signals are the means by which the Drum Major has of communicating with the band. Clear, correct, and concise vocal commands will assist your band to perform confidently.

Concise: Direct and to-the-point. Keep the voice command simple.

Correct: Make sure the command being issued is correct! This will keep the band aware of their environment and keep confusion at a minimum.

Clear: The voice command must be given clearly and slowly. Enunciation and elocution are essential.

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Drum Majors must learn to develop their command voice. When giving voice commands the Drum Major must use their diaphragm and not their vocal cords. Otherwise, the vocal cords will become strained and cause the voice to become distorted.

Definitions

Regulation Pause: This is the space of time that separates two drill movements. The length of the space of time is two counts of quick time tempo or two paces of quick time.

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The RDMA Drill Manual for Pipes and Drums is currently 30 pages long and we still have a few more chapters to write. We are including both UK and Canadian drill. For other currently available manuals see the RDMA website: www.drummymajor.net

The Draped Mace

It is with much regret, to inform you of the passing of Senior Drum Major Bill McCutcheon, Drum Major, of the Royal Canadian Legion Massed Pipes and Drums.

Bill was a former Sergeant of the Toronto Police, and became Drum Major of the Toronto Police Pipe Band in 1962 and remained Drum Major, until he retired in 1975.

Bill then became the Drum Major of Royal Canadian Legion Massed Pipes and Drums, eventually becoming the Senior Drum Major and remaining such, until the time of his death.

I can remember when Bill came to me, I was Drum Major of the 48th Highlanders and he asked me to give him some help and instruction. Now when I look back on all the years since then, when Bill and I would meet and talk as Drum Majors, I am honored, that I was able to know such a great gentleman and Drum Major.

*Norman Mackenzie
Tattoo Drum Major
Nova Scotia International Tattoo*

WEBSITE AND OTHER RDMA ISSUES

Web Site News

Our President has been busily revamping the entire website. This has been no small feat and it's looking great. Further, a 'Member's Only' password protected webpage is been successfully tested. This new page will allow members to have access to additional information within the privacy of password protection. Is there something in particular you'd like to see within such an environment? Drop Paul a line.

How to Access the 'Member's Only', Page

Upon selecting the 'Member's Only', button a dialog box will prompt you for your user ID and password. Your user ID is the email address that you provided us in your membership form. The password is "mace". We aren't exactly sure why but after you select enter the dialog box will again appear, this time with the user id field self populated. DO NOT enter your password again. Instead directly hit "Enter" and you should be into the page. Let me know if you are unable to get in. polson8568@aol.com

Manuals!!!!

We currently have five manual projects underway: The RDMA Drill Manual for Pipes and Drums, The RDMA Regimental Dress Manual for Pipes and Drums, the RDMA Signal Baton Manual for Fifes and Drums, the Revised RDMA Words of Command for Pipes and Drums, and a Revised RDMA Mace Manual for Pipes and Drums.

2005 Events Worldwide

Are posted on the RDMA website: <http://www.drummy.net/1Calendar.htm>

Classified Ads

For Pipe Band Insignia needs, check out: <http://www.majorblingbling.com/>

*If you have items to sell or wish to write an article, please send them to Maureen Baile (maureenbaile@optonline.net).
Editorial staff has final approval in ad insertions.*