

DONALD MACDONALD CUACH

30th May 2025



The Clan Donald Lands Trust would like to thank Dr Angus MacDonald for his assistance in organising this competition. We also offer a special welcome to adjudicator John Wilson.



Meet the Pipers



Alasdair Henderson

Cumha Dubh Shomhairle

(Lament for Samuel or The Stewarts White Banner)

Brought up in Dunoon, Argyll, Alasdair received his initial tuition under the expert guidance of his uncle P/M Jim Henderson. This apprenticeship laid the foundation for a career filled with notable achievements.

His piping led him to Glasgow where he enrolled on the BA (Scottish Music - Piping) degree course at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama. He had the privilege of learning from a number of accomplished pipers, each contributing their unique expertise and whose guidance he is grateful for.

He has been an integral part of some of the world's foremost Grade 1 pipe bands. After four seasons with Scottish Power, he embarked on a new chapter by joining the ranks of Inveraray & District. He ascended to the role of Pipe Sergeant in 2014 and since then the band has achieved many significant triumphs, including the World Championship title in 2017, 2019 and 2024 as well as a remarkable 13 Major Championships.

His solo accomplishments also shine brightly in his career thus far with notable successes including: both Gold Medals, the Senior Piobaireachd and Former Winners MSR at the Argyllshire Gathering, the MSR at the Masters Solo Competition, and the Piobaireachd and overall title at the Donald MacLeod Memorial.

He now lives in Edinburgh with his wife Olivia and beyond his performances is a dedicated educator. He has served as a Piping Instructor at some of the most esteemed schools in the country and in his current role at Fettes College continues to inspire the next generation of pipers.



Willie McCallum

'S fhada mar seo tha sin (Too long in this condition)

Willie is a native of Campbeltown, Kintyre, where he learned his piping from his uncles Ronald and Hugh and also from P/M Ronald McCallum, Inveraray.

Donald MacDonald was resident in Campbeltown in the early 19th Century, and his daughter Margaret married James McCallum, an ancestor of Willie's.

Willie is a previous winner of the Donald MacDonald Quaich in 1991, 1993 and 1997. He is a double Gold Medallist and other wins include the Senior Piobaireachd 3 times, Former Winners MSR at Northern Meeting 4 times, Former Winners MSR at Argyllshire Gathering 5 times, 3 Silver Chanters, Bratach Gorm 4 times, The P/M Donald MacLeod Memorial 9 times, MSR at London 5 times.

Willie works at the National Piping Centre as lead tutor on the B. Mus Trad Piping Degree, run by the RCS. He teaches and performs worldwide. His business, Willie McCallum Piping, involves designing and selling bagpipes and pipe bags/moisture control products, through his association with McCallum Bagpipes Ltd and Bannatyne Ltd. Many of his students are champion pipers.

Willie lives in Bearsden with his wife Christine and has a daughter, Hailey and son, Scott.



Finlay Johnston

Cumha an Aona Mhic (The lament for the Only Son)

Finlay first began learning piping at age 8 from his grandfather Alastair Sinclair, during a summer spent at his Grandfather's home on Tìree. He began receiving lessons from Ronnie McShannon shortly thereafter, and has continued to do so since. His mother Anne Johnston was a very successful solo piper, being the first woman to win the Silver Medal. His father, the late Tommy Johnston, was a successful pipe band drummer and played under Leading Drummer Alex Duthart.

Some of Finlay's solo piping results include both Gold Medals at the Argyllshire Gathering / Northern Meeting, the Clasp at the Northern Meeting, the overall winner at the Glenfiddich in 2018 & 2019, the Overall winner at the Donald MacLeod Memorial 2019, the 2022 Silver Chanter winner and 2024 Bratach Gorm winner.

Finlay has played in several pipe bands over his career, including the Spirit of Scotland and Inveraray & District Pipe Band. He previously worked as an instructor at the National Piping Centre, and is now following his father's footsteps working at Pipe Dreams, the manufacturers of Ezeedrone reeds.



Stuart Liddell

Cogadh no Sith (War or Peace)

Originally taught from the age of 9 by his grandfather, Pipe Major Ronald McCallum MBE, Stuart has gone on in his early teens to receive tuition from Arthur Gillies and, as a young adult, received the finer points in light music from Jim Henderson, Dunoon and piobaireachd from Hugh MacCallum, who was a cousin of his grandfather – with many other major influential musicians along the way!

One of the most gifted pipers in the world today, Stuart has won three Clasps and four Silver Stars at the Northern Meeting in Inverness, Senior Piobaireachd at the Argyllshire Gathering in Oban five times, both Gold Medals and is a three-time Glenfiddich Champion.

Previously a member of Scottish Power Pipe Band and The Simon Fraser University Pipe Band, he is founder and Pipe Major of the Inveraray & District Pipe Band, Grade 1 winners of the World Pipe Band Championship in 2017, 2019 & 2024.

Stuart has achieved the distinction of being the only Pipe Major and soloist in history, to date, to hold the Glenfiddich Championship and the World Pipe Band Championship simultaneously. He is honorary piper to the Royal Celtic Society and was awarded the MBE in King Charles III first New Year's Honours List.