

# Spirit of Scotia: Renfrew Highland Pipes and Drums



Renfrew Highlands Pipes and Drums, 2010s

## Renfrew's Pipe Band

Renfrew Highland Pipes and Drums has been entertaining and moving audiences for more than 110 years. They have also been teaching the next generation of musicians for just as long.

Their history is feriously local but was affected by events on both national and global levels.

It is a colourful history reflected in the tartans worn over the years.



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## Tartans Tell the Story

Each chapter of the band's history is visually identified by the tartan worn.

The original band was issued a tunic and trousers. Individual tartans could be worn.

Since 1927, members of the band have worn four different tartans at different times. The Blackwatch and Royal Stuart tartans were worn by the Lanark and Renfrew Scottish Regiment from 1927 to 1969. The Buchanan tartan was worn from 1970 to 2002. The Renfrewshire tartan has been worn since 2003.



## Spirit of Scotia

The story of the band exemplifies the Spirit of the Scottish people who have been emigrating to Canada for over 200 years and are an integral ingredient to the character of the Ottawa Valley.

Other Scottish initiatives associated with the band are Robbie Burns dinners, a Scottish Thistle Club and the Renfrew Highland Games held from 1963-1966.



Morris Burnton, pipe major, teaching Rob MacKenzie, Audrey MacLaren and Dan Campbell, 1970s

## An Independent Band

Over the years the band has been mistakenly called a Town of Renfrew band or a Legion band. In reality they are neither.

Rather, it is a self-directed group that has benefited from and greatly appreciates the support of its local community where it practices and has gained from a strong affiliation with the Renfrew Legion Branch #148.

The community and especially the Legion have been, over these many years, ardent supporters and, in the members' opinion, an integral part of their success.



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# Origins: Renfrew Pipe Band



Renfrew Pipe Band, circa 1920

## George Carruth

George Carruth grew up in Renfrew. He went to Belleville, Ontario and became a star lacrosse player. Here, he learned his trade, tailoring. He also learned to play the bagpipes under Pipe Major Albert Johnson.

George purchased a tailor shop in Renfrew and returned home. He was called on to play the bagpipes for Scottish dancers, curling clubs and more. He was also a good Scotch comedian.

Some of the young men in the town wanted to learn to play the bagpipes so George decided to teach them in his tailor shop.



RENFREW'S PIPE BAND IN 1917. Back row, left to right: Kenneth McIntyre, Wallace Flood, Percy Pierce, Tom Rolley, Alec McPhail, Dave Farquharson, James McCallum. Middle row: Lorne Totten, Robert Briscoe, James C. Fraser, Fred Totten. Front row: Wilmer Payne, Percy Devenny, Nelson Cox, Arthur Plaunt, Jack Bennett.

## A New Pipe Band

As the student pipers became proficient, talk started of forming a pipe band. Mr. Tom Barnet Sr. and Mrs. Harvey Totten led the fundraising effort. Enough money was raised to buy a few sets of pipes and drums.

The band was outfitted at the armoury on Hall Street by Bill Elliott. The uniforms consisted of a blue wedge cap, blue or red tunic, blue trousers, and a leather belt.

The Renfrew Pipe Band's first engagement was at a curling match in Pembroke in 1911 or 1912.



## The Great War

The Renfrew Pipe Band went to Petawawa with the local company of 42nd Lanark and Renfrew Regiment under Captain Tom Barnet and Lieutenant Jack Airth in 1912 or 1913.

When war broke out in 1914, the band led parades of volunteers joining battalions to go overseas. In Kingston, they were given the opportunity to join the 21st Battalion as a band under Colonel St. Pierre Hughes. Given their young age, they declined and went back to Renfrew except one member, Hughie MacEachen.

This would be the first of many members to leave the band and join the war effort.



Renfrew Pipe Band, circa 1915

## Tom Marks' Kilties

In the fall of 1915, George Carruth was approached by Tom Marks, one of Canada's most famous vaudeville promoters, to organize a small pipe band to join his show.

George Carruth, Jim Young, Jack MacMillan, Stewart Affleck, and Davie Dick, left the Renfrew Pipe Band to tour as Tom Marks' Kilties. Like the Renfrew Pipe Band, the members of the Kilties were drawn away to join the war effort.

After the war, the Renfrew Pipe Band was reorganized. Many of the original musicians did not rejoin. The war had changed everyone's lives. The private band continued to play local engagements until 1926 under James C. Fraser.



Renfrew Pipe Band, circa 1920



# Military Band: Lanark and Renfrew Scottish Regiment



Lanark and Renfrew Scottish Regiment, 1943

## Joining the Military

In 1927, the Lanark and Renfrew Regiment became the Lanark and Renfrew Scottish Regiment. The HQ Company was stationed in Renfrew.

Canadian-Scottish regiments are regiments in the Canadian Army that maintain the traditions and style of dress used by Scottish regiments.

Members of the Renfrew Pipe Band joined the military and formed the nucleus of this new militia pipe band.



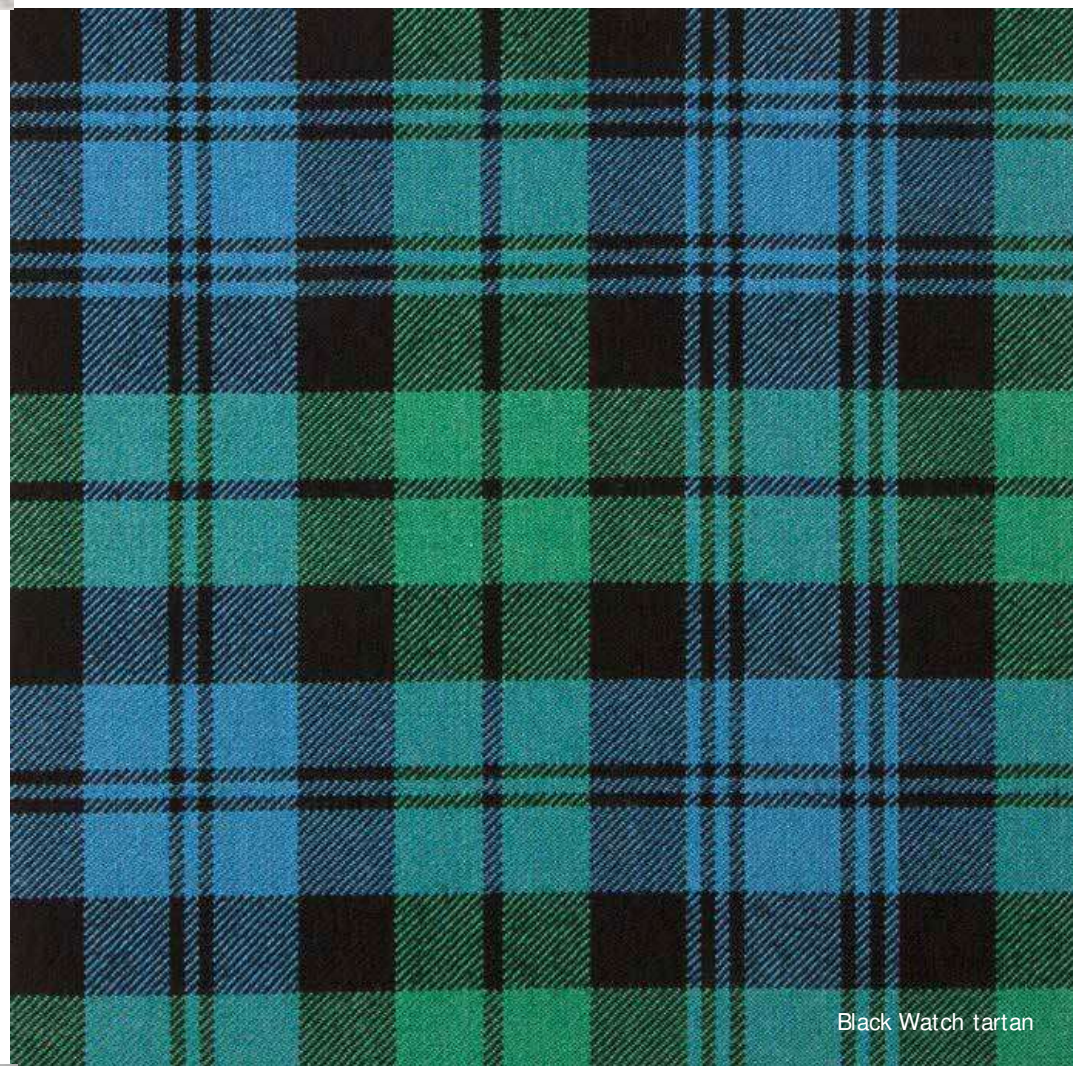
Lanark and Renfrew Scottish Regiment Pin

## Black Watch Tartan

The Lanark and Renfrew Scottish Regiment adopted the Government (Black Watch tartan). Its use in the Canadian military dates back to 1862.

The origins of the tartan date back to 1725. Six 'watch' companies were established after the Jacobite Rebellion of 1715 to patrol the Scottish Highlands. The tartan is named for the dark colour of the material and the role of the companies to "watch" over the highland.

Pipers of the Lanark and Scottish Regiment were also given permission to use the Royal Stuart tartan. It was also the personal tartan of Queen Elizabeth II.



Black Watch tartan

## World War II

The regiment did not initially mobilize for World War II in 1939.

The regiment was mobilized on March 5, 1942, and served as part of the Army's Atlantic Command in a home defence role. They were transferred across the country including Dartmouth, Nova Scotia and Port Alberni, British Columbia. Eventually, the regiment and band were broken up and sent to other regiments where many served overseas.

After the war, some band members returned to Renfrew. Once again, the band reorganized under the Lanark and Renfrew Scottish Regiment.



William Flood, circa 1940

## After the War

From 1945 to 1969, the Lanark and Renfrew regimental pipe band was a local fixture.

There were many changes to the organization of the regiment during this time period. The pipe band survived them all until the Canadian Forces reorganized in 1969. The Renfrew Company of the Lanark and Renfrew Scottish Regiment was closed. The regimental band moved to Pembroke.

The group of local pipers and drummers were left without uniforms and instruments and an unknown future.



SERGEANTS' MESS - 42ND LANARK & RENFREW SCOTTISH REGT. PEMBROKE 1935



# Independence: Renfrew Highland Pipes and Drums



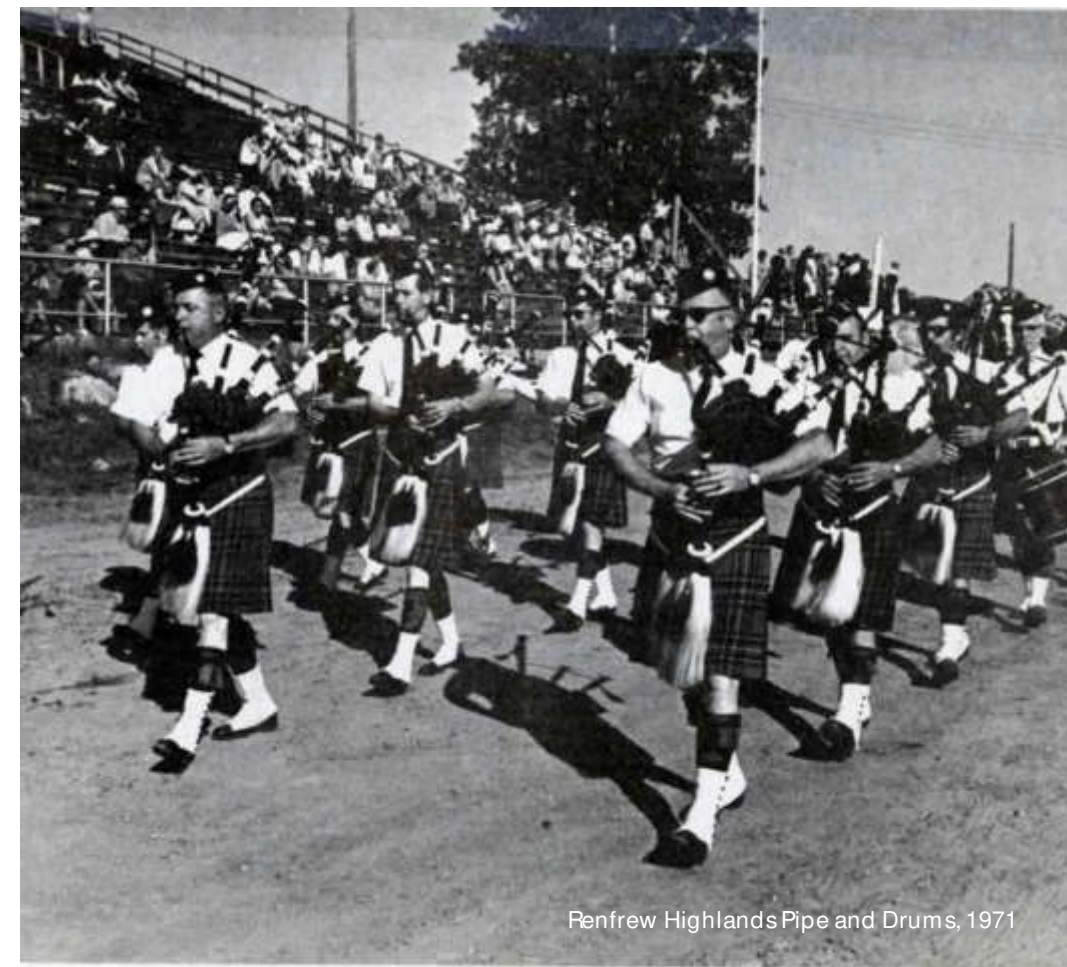
Renfrew Highlands Pipe and Drums, 1971

## A New Beginning

In 1970, under the guidance of Pipe Major D.J. McCallum, the Renfrew Highlands Pipes and Drums came to existence.

This time, the band would self-sustaining, belonging to no one group or community. They made a commitment to fiercely guard their independence.

They raised funds through service clubs, citizens and community support. In 1971, the band was able to kit 22 members for parades.



Renfrew Highlands Pipe and Drums, 1971

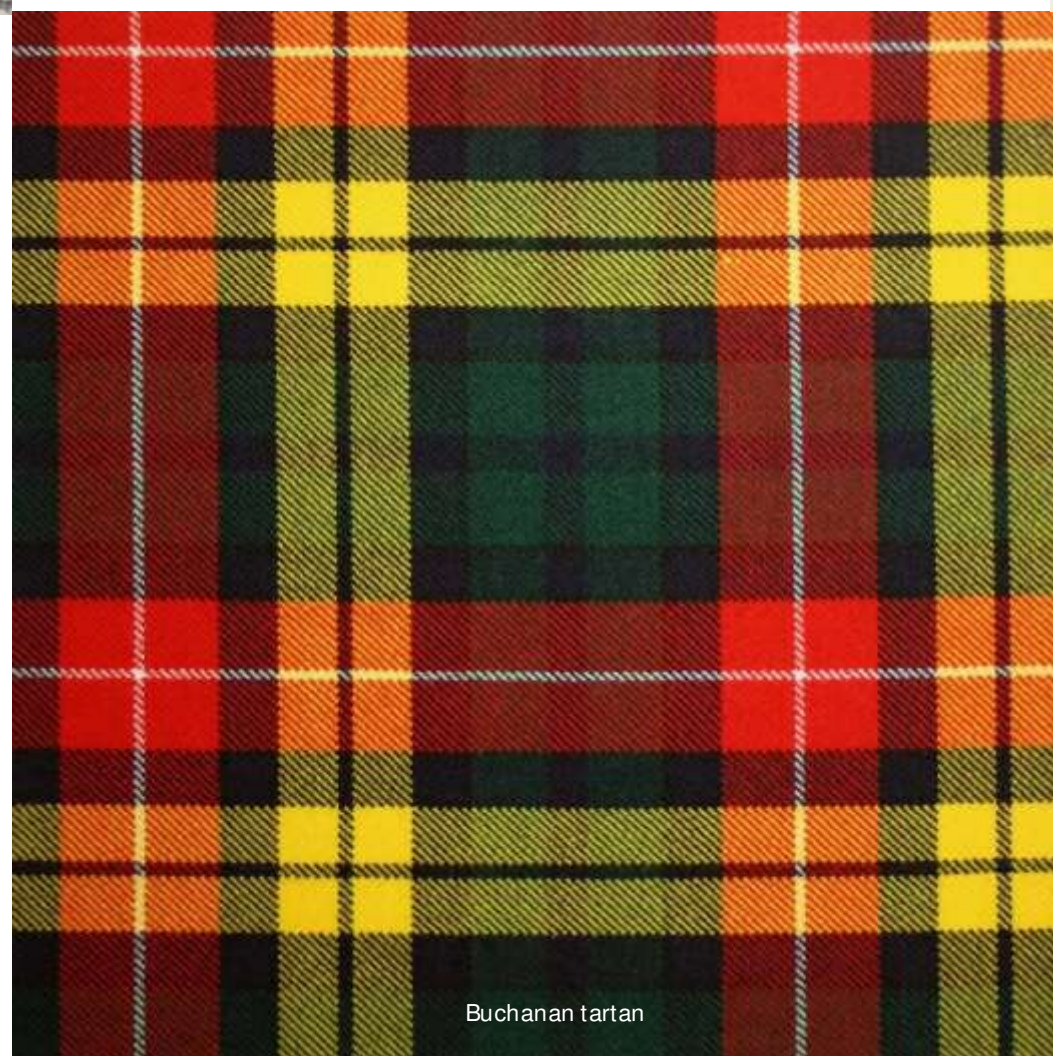
The Renfrew Highland Pipes and Drums made their debut with new uniforms and equipment at the Renfrew Fair.

## Buchanan Tartan

Folklore tells us that there was much discussion around which tartan to wear. Many of the band members claimed Scottish lineage and each wanted their own tartan.

An executive decision was made. Wherever the Book of Tartans was opened to, that would be the new Tartan for the band. The book opened on the tartan of the Buchanan clan, a tartan known for its brilliant colours.

The band would wear the tartan proudly for over thirty years.

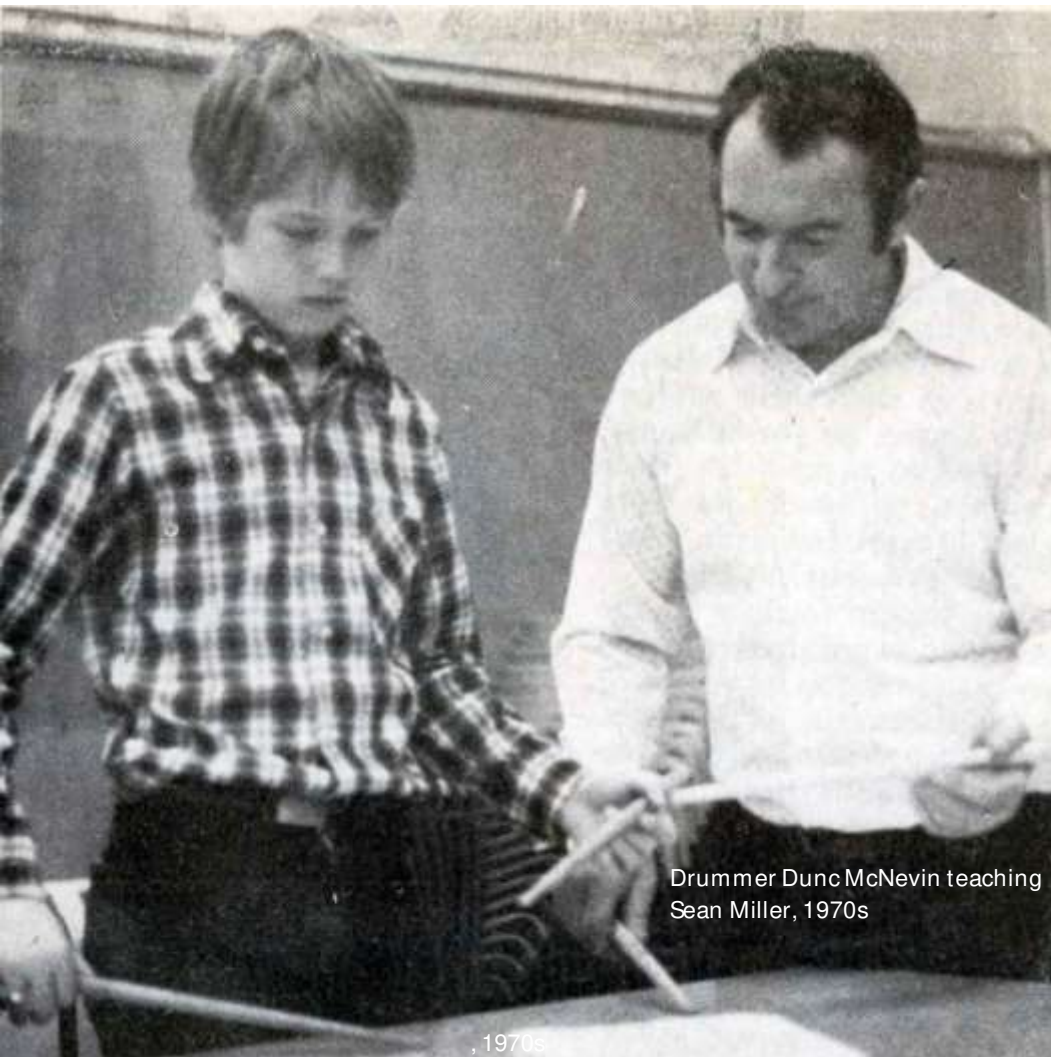


Buchanan tartan

## Values of the Members

The values of the Renfrew Highlands Pipes & Drums members at this time were recorded as:

- Proud of their heritage;
- Revelled in the camaraderie of their fellow musicians;
- Possessed a strong sense of community;
- Fine musicians;
- Avid Scots;
- and as legend would have it - "fun loving".



Drummer Dunc McNevin teaching Sean Miller, 1970s

## Sharing Culture and Music

From 1970 until January, 2003, the Renfrew Highlands Pipes and Drums has proudly worn the Buchanan. The band has benefited from the strong leadership of the early Pipe Majors: D.J. McCallum, Brian Brown, Morris Burton, Clark Smith, Alan Cole and Jim Savage.

The band has shared their joy of culture and music throughout the County of Renfrew: Barry's Bay, Pembroke, Cobden, Eganville, Mattawa, Arnprior and Renfrew as well as travelled to Smith's Falls, Brockville, Middelville, Almonte, and beyond.



Renfrew Highlands Pipe and Drums, 1970s



# Marching On: Renfrew Highland Pipes and Drums



Renfrew Highlands Pipes and Drums, 2010s

## A New Tartan

In 2002, after much discussion, the Band entered into the debate of changing their band tartan as the uniforms had seen many parades.

The members found themselves in the similar situation of their predecessors, choosing a Tartan that did not represent any one individual or family. The Book of Tartans approach could be used once again, but it was not a strategy the group was eager to follow.

A keyword search of Renfrew led the band to the Renfrewshire tartan. A connection with Renfrewshire, Scotland and the band began.

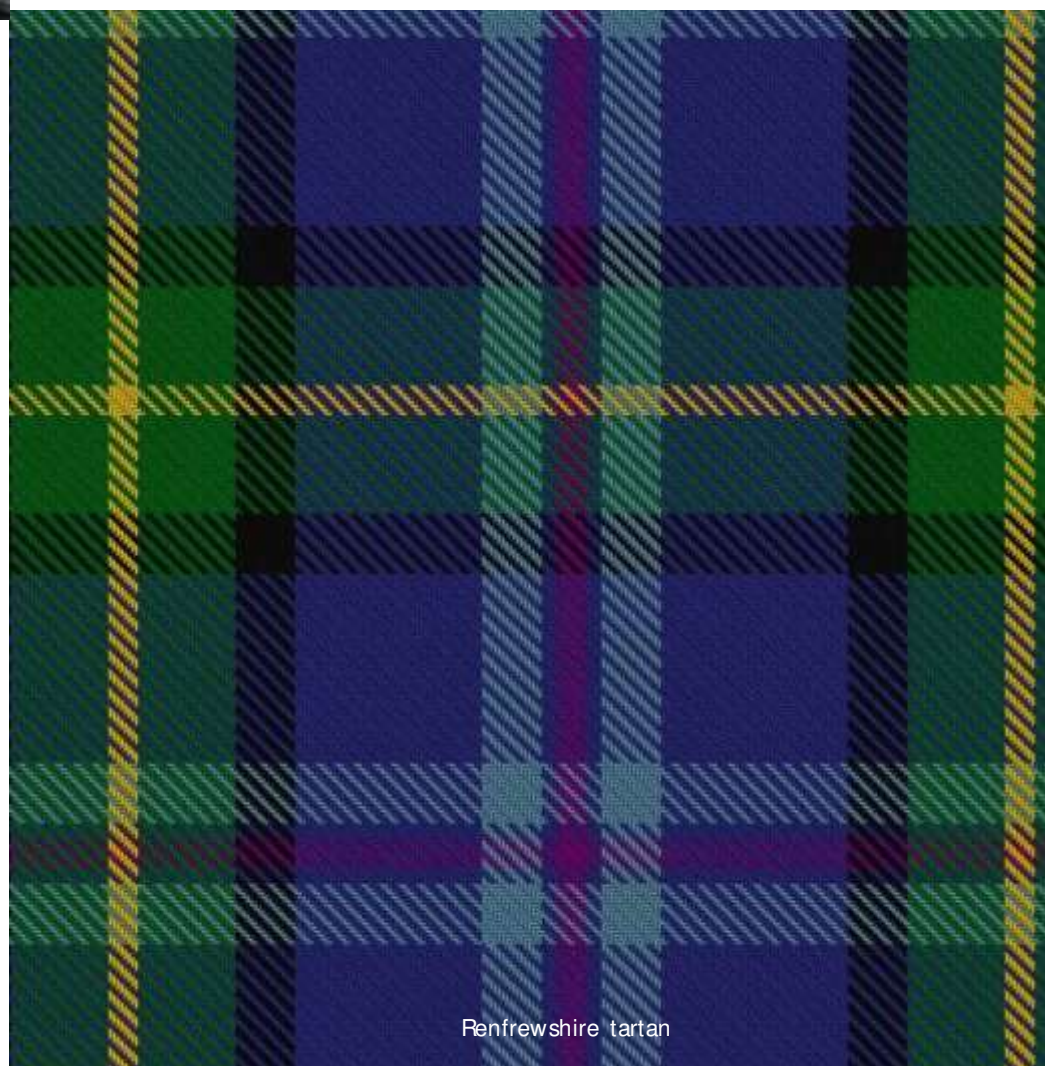


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## Renfrewshire Tartan

Over a number of months, the Renfrew Highland Pipes and Drums had sought and been granted permission by the Tartan's creator David McGill to wear the Renfrewshire Tartan. This is the only pipeband in the world to wear the tartan.

Green represents the rural landscape.  
Gold is for the yellow stone mined in Giffnock.  
Blue represents the Firth of Clyde.  
Pale blue represents the tradition of ship building and seafaring.  
Black represents ironstone use to fuel its many industries.  
Purple honours the birthplace of Sir William Wallace, Guardian of Scotland.



Renfrewshire tartan

## A New Era

So, as before in 1970, the Renfrew Highland Pipes and Drums has embarked on a new era, led this time by a group of men and women who are:

- proud of their heritage;
- revel in the camaraderie of their fellow musicians;
- possess a strong sense of community.

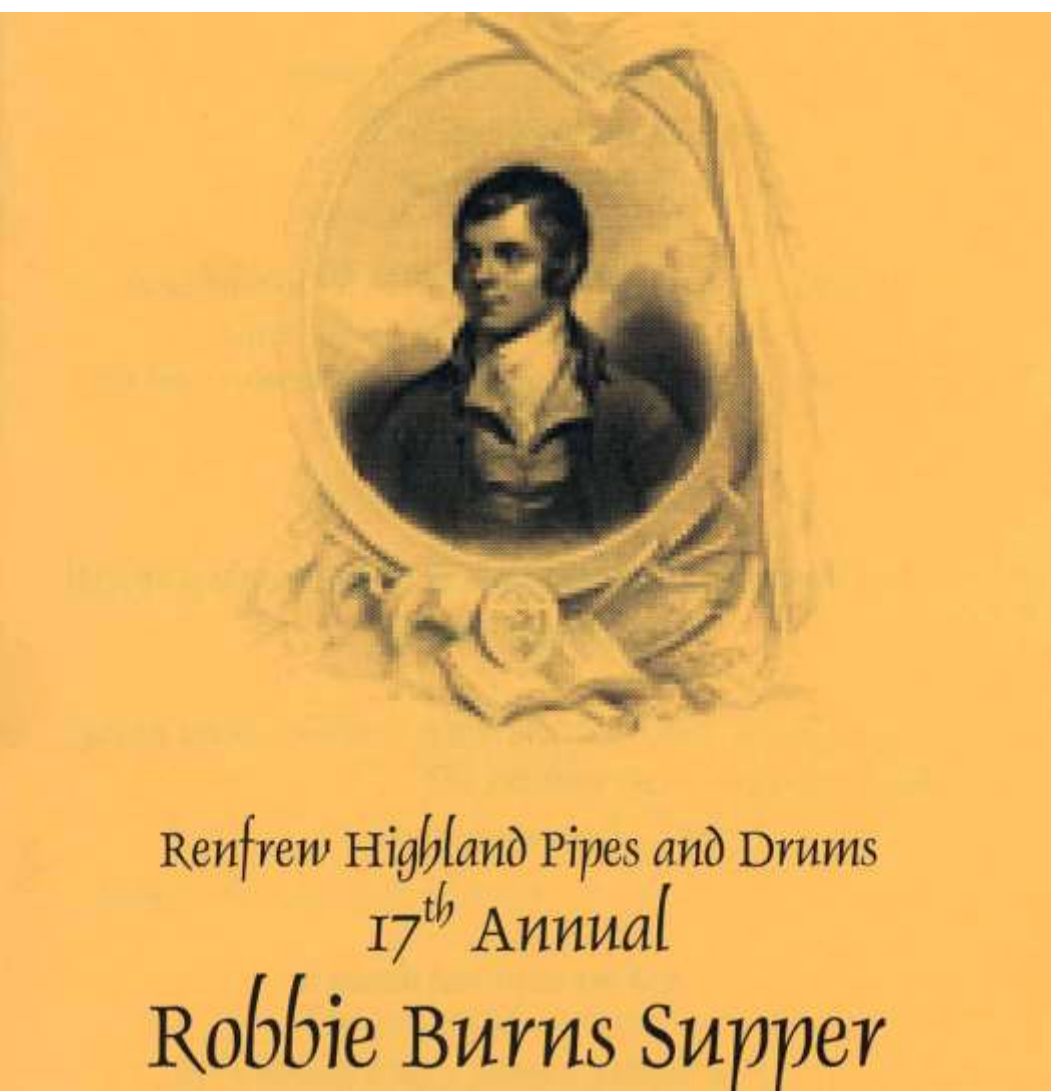
These men and women are:

- fine musicians;
- avid Scots, or ish they were;
- and always "fun loving".

## Spirit of Scotia and Spirit of Renfrew

The wearing of a new Tartan for the Band provided a wonderful opportunity for them to broaden their horizons. It also allowed them to recognize the community for which it is an independent member, the County of Renfrew, or Renfrewshire in Scots speak.

"The children O' Scotland  
may roam the world o'er  
but oor thoughts aye return  
to the land we adore  
where the saltires fly proudly  
high in the sky  
and the skirl o' the pipes  
brings a tear tae yer eye"



Renfrew Highland Pipes and Drums  
17<sup>th</sup> Annual  
Robbie Burns Supper



Renfrew Highlands Pipes and Drums, 2010s