

Founding of the LBPS.

Jimmy Wilson started playing Lowland pipes in the early 1960s when he worked in the College and found a set among the museum pieces. He was pictured on the cover of the Piping Times in July 1965 playing the Lowland pipes in the play Johnnie Armstrong's Last Goodnight at the National Theatre, Drury Lane, London. He also played a Lowland piper in the play Toom Byres at Glasgow Citizens' Theatre. It was Jimmy Wilson who got Mike Rowan started on Lowland pipes. There have been interviews with Jimmy in Common Stock.

Robert Wallace says he started playing Scottish Bellows blown bagpipes in 1976 using a cannibalized set of half size Highland pipes which he fitted into a common stock.

Iain MacDonald (Neilston) was another early bellows piper. He too was a Highland piper. His early contacts were with Northumbrian and Irish bellows pipes and he had tuition in both. He remembers pre 1980s players were Robert Wallace, Whistlebinkies; Jimmy Anderson, Clutha; Jimmy Wilson and Mike Rowan.

Grainger and Campbell announced in the Piping Times in March 1982 that they were now making Lowland bagpipes because there was a great demand for them. Iain MacDonald was pictured playing them in their catalogue. About this time David Stevenson advertised in the Piping Times for a set of Lowland pipes. I've got the reference somewhere.

There was an article in the International Piper in April 1981. This was about a meeting at the Festival Club on the final day of the Edinburgh Folk Festival, which had as its object the revival of the Lowland pipe. At the end of the article three addresses were given so that anyone interested in forming a society could get in contact. The three were Mike Rowan, Gordon Mooney and Hugh Cheape.

Several meetings were held over the next two years. Cedric Clark from Dirleton in East Lothian had a letter in the Piping Times in August 1982. This was about the new Society and the various meetings which had been held over the past year but it was on 16th April 1983 that the Society was formally instituted at a meeting in the College of Piping. This meeting was reported in full in the Piping Times. The officials were President Jimmy Wilson, Vice President Cedric Clark, Chairman Mike Rowan, Vice Chairman Iain MacDonald, Secretary Gordon Mooney. Soon afterwards David Hannay was appointed as Treasurer.

I joined in October 1983 by accident. Seumas MacNeill had been opening the College for meetings but couldn't manage that Saturday and asked me if I would open up for them. He said I knew some of them and would be welcome to stay for the meeting. I knew Jimmy Wilson as he had worked in the College and had met Mike Rowan when he had been in the College to arrange meetings and I knew David Hannay as we both went to the SPA weekly club nights. I stayed for the meeting and Robbie Greensitt strapped me into a set of his pipes and told me I was good at it. (a great sales method!) By the end of the meeting I'd ordered pipes from Robbie and joined the Society. I became Secretary at the AGM in June 1984 and also Treasurer in December 1984 when David Hannay moved away. I held both positions until October 1990 when Manuel Trucco took over.

During these early years meetings were held at 2pm on the second Saturday of the second month throughout the year and alternated between the College of Piping in Glasgow and the School of Scottish Studies in Edinburgh with occasional meetings in the borders. There was usually a brief business meeting then sometimes a guest speaker or player or workshop and the rest of the time was spent in playing. Edinburgh meetings usually moved on to Sandy Bell's for the evening.

(Going back to the early officials, I remember Cedric Clark who was an elderly gentleman but didn't know much about him. I have asked others and the best description I have obtained is that Cedric was an enthusiastic but tone deaf border piper. Iain MacDonald is Finlay MacDonald's father. The others you will know.)

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