

## **A New Era Begins**

The strength of any organization is, in part, the mix of old and new elements. Old eras become foundational components and new eras build upon those strengths. So it is with the Cobourg Legion Pipes and Drums. For more than 50 years the band has seen membership grow and diminish, consolidate and expand, but always with an eye to preparing and presenting pipe and drum music to the community that has supported it throughout those years. As the Cobourg Legion Branch 133 band we have the privilege of playing for their mission of recognizing and celebrating our veterans; as the Cobourg Police Service Pipes and Drums, we play also in support of their needs.

The same dedication to evolution and change has taken place during the last few months, with the result that the CLP&D enters a new era as September begins. Several retirements mean that a new band order has emerged, built upon the strengths shaped by several departing members. Mary Ito retired from her position as Pipe Major this summer, a post she held for 12 years, and which began years earlier under the tutelage of founding Pipe Major George Lovett. During this time she imbued the practice and performance of pipe and drum music with her signature encouragement of excellence and enjoyment. She set a high standard for the tunes that were played at the same time that she made the music and the effort fun and family-like, all while over-seeing the many and varied components of band activity. Not an easy chore but one that Mary excelled at delivering to all band members throughout her leadership tenure. We wish Mary well in whatever venture to which she turns her caring and accomplished hand.

Several other members have also chosen the pandemic pause to reassess their extra-curricular activities. Each in their own right were diligent and contributing members of the band and will be sorely missed. Drum Major and Quarter-Master Steve Shortt will have more time for his country estate now, with the help of his wife Kimberly, both of whom have retired from their respective leadership and drumming roles in the last two months. Steve's excellence at parade preparation and guidance, and high standard of uniform preparedness, and Kimberly's years of participation and mentorship as a tenor drummer, means the pair will be more than doubly missed. Longtime piper and Past-President Brent Sanderson will have more time to devote to his wood working hobbies/business and to their two new grandsons. Joanne Drury, educator and adjutant, idea-person and implementer, and tireless at all her efforts, will continue to play but as a student of the piobroch, the challenging classical music of solo piping. Ron Taylor, one of the band originals, with a wealth of willingly shared piping experience and James Bruce, a source of band project excellence and guidance, and a fine schooled-in-Scotland piper, have also reduced their band workload as they re-assess and re-assign their energies after many years of playing, parading and helping neophyte pipers. We offer our best wishes to all of these pioneers and practitioners of pipe and drum music.

Despite the recent exodus of band members, the Cobourg Legion Pipes and Drums and the Cobourg Police Service Pipes and Drums remain vital and viable bands of pipers and drummers.

This is due in part to the assumption of the leadership role, as our newest Pipe Major, of Michael Beech. Michael is no stranger to the area or to the band, having grown up in Cobourg, learning under the guidance of the above mentioned founding Pipe Major George Lovett, and, over the intervening 50 years, expanding his piping experiences with this, and other, pipe bands. Highlights of those years are many, but chief among them would be, while with the City of Vancouver Police Pipes and Drums, the opportunity to play for the Changing of the Guard at both Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle, at the Edinburgh Tattoo, and in Basel, Switzerland. Michael brings a wide and deep range of piping experiences to his post of Cobourg's newest Pipe Major, as well as a commitment to the traditions of the CLP&D/CPSP&D and the many and various community connections that have evolved over the band's more than 55 years in Cobourg.

As we move forward into the "new era", the band will continue to offer their services to Branch 133 of the Cobourg Legion, the Cobourg Police Services and the Cobourg community at large. Michael will be aided in his leadership by newly appointed Pipe Sergeant David MacDiarmid, veteran Drum Sergeant Mark Diminie, and each and every member associated with the music that we offer. If you are interested in becoming a part of this community centrepiece, we offer free instruction in drumming and piping, and would be pleased to make those arrangements if you were to contact the band or any of its members. In the meantime, our sincere best wishes to the band members who have chosen to pursue other interests but whose hearts, we know, are in the Highlands. Should you ever change your mind, our doors are always open.

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