

NORTHUMBRIAN PIPERS' SOCIETY ONLINE COMPETITIONS 2020

Due to Covid 19 restrictions, the NPS Annual Competitions will be held as an online event in 2020. This will enable competitors from all over the world to take part on equal terms, so we hope that many people who would not usually be able to get to the event will be able to take part this year, either as a competitor or as a spectator.

To make the technical side manageable, the presentation of the competitions will be pre-recorded. Each class will be judged in advance, based on video performances submitted by entrants. A compilation of clips of the entries for each class will be shown on the night, along with comments from the judges and announcement of the judge's decision.

General Rules

Wherever small pipes are mentioned, this refers to Northumbrian Small Pipes within the description contained in the Society Rules. Definitions of these, and of Border (or Lowland/Half-long pipes) are obtainable from the Secretary, if required.

Scottish small pipes with open chanterers are not accepted.

Entries for playing classes will be accepted as video recordings UP TO 5.00PM (UK time) on 5 October 2020.

Video submissions

Video recordings can be made on any device including mobile phones and the quality of the video will not affect your entry. It is recommended that you make the recording as close to being 'there in person with the judge' as possible. Introducing your tunes on video before you play is not required but the judge may find it helpful. The start can be trimmed – but your submission should start from before the beginning of the melody. Entries should be submitted as a continuous recording from a single point of view (no cuts, overlays or inserted scenes). Please do not add titles or comments in the main body of the video (start and end titles are allowed but not requested or required).

Ideally the video should be taken from the position of the audience and show both you and your pipes. Other angles are acceptable as long as the judge can identify who is playing and what they are doing. The video should include the complete set of music up to and including the stopping of the drones at the end. If you retune between tunes, this should be part of the continuous shot. Recordings of live events (such as concert spots) cannot be accepted.

Processing the audio recording for sound quality is permitted but not required. Excessive processing and additional effects are discouraged and may invalidate your entry. If you are entering multiple classes, your entries should be recorded and submitted as separate videos.

Videos need to be uploaded via the form / links on the NPS website. Submissions of videos via social media platforms (links to Youtube, Facebook, Vimeo etc) can't be accepted. Most video submissions are expected to be 3 and 6 minutes long; anything in excess of 10 minutes may be declined. Publicly sharing your entry for playing classes before the competition results are announced will invalidate your entry – but you are free to do this once the competition has finished.

A more detailed guidance note on producing and submitting video entries is available on the NPS website and is to be treated as part of the rules of the competitions.

Entries for composition classes and the pipemaking class will be accepted up to and including 30 September 2020.

All classes are open to both members and non-members of the NPS.

The winner of the Small pipes Open will receive a silver medal. The winners of the Smallpipes Intermediate and Advanced, and the Border Pipes Open Classes will each receive a bronze medal. Winners of all other classes will receive plaques, and certificates will be issued to all placed competitors.

The judge will award placings to reflect both technical ability and musicality. Deciding factors will also include tuning, presentation, and a suitable choice of tunes for the class. If the judge feels that, in any particular class, the standard of entry is not sufficiently high, then the trophy need not be awarded. However, competitors will be placed.

Judges may not compete in classes that they are judging.

The use of music is not prohibited in playing classes, but the judge may consider that this detracts from the performance, particularly in the more advanced classes.

Use of appropriate drone harmonies is to be encouraged.

Open class competitors please note: for all classes where variations are required (the specification is at least three') consideration needs to be given to whether the tune (theme, or ground) has one or two parts (strains). For two-part tunes, the requirement for three variations means that at least eight strains (including the theme) should be played. For tunes having only one theme, a minimum of six strains in total is required.

Classes

Please do not submit more tunes than are specified – any extra tunes will be disregarded by the judge.

Class 1 Composition – Judge, Alistair Anderson

For Bill Cassie trophy. An original tune that must be playable on Northumbrian small pipes, and must not have won any previous composition competition, at any venue. A manuscript of the tune must be submitted to the competition organiser by 30th September. No competitor may enter more than two tunes. Submitting a tune grants the Society unrestricted right to publish it in any of its publications, on its website, and for it to be performed at the online presentation of the competitions. Winners in three successive years are barred from entry in the following year (only).

Class 2 Composition of Variations – Judge, Alistair Anderson

For Sunderland Trophy. A set of at least three variations, to an existing, or original, tune, which must be playable on the Northumbrian small pipes, and must not have won any previous variation or composition competition, at any venue. A manuscript of the set must be submitted to the competition organiser by 30th September. No competitor may enter more than two sets. Submitting a tune grants the Society the unrestricted right to publish it in any of its publications and on its website, and for it to be performed at the online presentation of the competitions. Winners in three successive years are barred from entry the following year (only).

PLEASE NOTE: Competitors may enter only one of Classes 3 (Novice), 5 (Beginners), 6 (Blackthorn Stick), 7 (Intermediate), 8 (Advanced), and 9 (Open). If entries are received for more than one of these classes from the same competitor, only the most junior class entry will be accepted.

Class 3. Small pipes Novice – Judge, Andy May

For Crystal Bowl donated by Derek Jarvis. Open only to members of the NPS. Competitors must have less than two years piping experience of any kind and must not have won any type of bagpiping competition. Two tunes of own choice.

Class 4. Small pipes Junior – Judge, Andy May

For J.K. Stanger plaid and brooch. Open to those who are under the age of sixteen on the day of the competition. Two tunes of own choice. Any player winning the class three times (whether in successive years or not) is thereafter barred from further entry.

Class 5. Small pipes Beginners – Judge, Kathryn Tickell

For Thornton Cup. Open to those who have not won any Intermediate or Open competition, and have not played for more than five years. Two tunes of own choice, of different rhythms. Previous winners of this class may not re-enter.

Class 6. Blackthorn Stick Trophy – Judge, Kathryn Tickell

Open only to those who started to play pipes after the age of 50. Two tune of own choice. Any player winning this class three times (whether in successive years or not) is thereafter barred from further entry.

Class 7. Small pipes Intermediate – Judge, Kathryn Tickell

For Billy Pigg Trophy. Open to those who have not previously won this class, Class 8 Advanced, or an Open competition at any venue. Three tunes of different rhythms, to include a slow air. Previous winners of this class may not re-enter.

Class 8. Small pipes Advanced – Judge, Kathryn Tickell

For Forster Charlton Cup. Three tunes of contrasting rhythms, with at least one key change. Open to those who have not previously won any Open class, at any venue. Competitors must have previously won an Intermediate competition. Judges will include consideration of the player's presentation, and ability to perform to an audience. Previous winners of this class may not re-enter.

Class 9. Small pipes Open – Judge, Kathryn Tickell

For Margaret Askew Cup and silver medal. Four tunes, with at least one key change. One tune must have at least three variations (see note in general rules). Judge will include consideration of the player's choice of programme, presentation, and ability to perform to an audience. Competitors must have previously won an Intermediate class., at any venue. Winners in three successive years are barred from entry in the following year (only).

Class 10 Duet for Small pipes or Border pipes – Judge, Andy May

For Marjorie Bell Challenge Cup. Two tunes of own choice. Consideration will particularly be given to the competitors' arrangements and to their ability to give an interesting and well-balanced performance.

Class 11 Mixed Duet/Ensemble – Judge, Andy May

For Pen Bal Crag Trophy. Two or more players – combination of small pipes and/or Border pipes, and/or any other acoustic instruments. Two tunes of different rhythms. An interesting and well-balanced performance will be looked for. Melody on pipes, with rhythmic accompaniment by one other instrument is not appropriate.

Class 12 Border pipes Half-longs or Lowland pipes – Judge, Andy May

- a) *Beginner/Intermediate.*** For Bill Stafford Memorial Trophy. For those players who have not won an Open Border pipe class, at any venue. Two tunes of contrasting rhythms. Previous winners of this class may not re-enter.
- b) *Open.*** For the Northumberland Half-long Pipes Cup, and bronze medal. One tune with at least three variations (see note in general rules), plus two other tunes of contrasting rhythms. Winners in three successive years are barred from entry in the following year (only).

Class 13 Pipemaking – Judge, Andy May

For the Bill Hedworth Trophy. A complete set of Northumbrian small pipes or Border pipes that have not previously won this class. Preference will be given to pipes entirely made, reeded, and tuned by the entrant. Pipes will be judged on both performance and appearance. Open to both amateur and professional makers, but professional makers, having won the trophy once, are debarred from further entry.

Entries in this class will be judged in such a manner as the Judge considers appropriate in order to enable due comparison of the sets entered.

Class 14 Funky Tune Composition – Judge, see below

The competition is to find an original tune or arrangement of an existing tune in a style which reflects contemporary musical styles and genres outside of the standard Northumbrian pipe repertoire. All tunes entered will become part of a collection of tunes for use by, particularly, young pipers. The class is open to composers of any age or ability and will be judged on the tune being played by the composer or their nominee on the Northumbrian small pipes. The class will be judged by three young pipers (from the YPG4Tips group) encompassing all playing abilities. The entries should be able to be played on the Northumbrian small pipes with the standard seven keys by a piper of lower intermediate level in the key of G. If an original tune, copyright must be licensed to the NPS to ensure widest access at no cost to young people. If an existing tune, it must not be in copyright unless the copyright holder has given permission for this tune to be published in NPS publications at no cost.