

# **NORTHUMBRIAN PIPERS' SOCIETY COMPETITIONS - 2023**

## **General Rules**

Wherever smallpipes are mentioned, this refers to Northumbrian Smallpipes as described on the NPS website. *Scottish Small Pipes with open chanters; and Shuttle Pipes, which use reed systems not in the Northumbrian tradition, are not accepted.* Any dispute about the definition of the smallpipes will be determined by the competition judge.

The winner of the Smallpipes Open will receive a silver medal. Winners of all other classes will receive plaques, and certificates will be issued to all placed competitors.

All decisions of the judges will be final, taking into account whatever factors they consider appropriate for the relevant 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 may still be placed at the judge's discretion.

Entrants may find it helpful to refer to the guidelines at the end of this document (which do not form part of the rules).

### ***Eligibility***

Apart from Class 6 (Smallpipes Novice) all classes are open to both members and non-members of the NPS.

Overseas Classes **1a, 1b, 1c, 2a, 2b, and class 16** are open only to those pipers domiciled and ordinarily resident outside the UK, who are unable to attend the competitions.

### ***Entry in multiple classes***

A competitor may not enter at the same competition:

- More than one of Classes **1a, 1b and 1c**
- More than one of Classes **2a and 2b**
- More than one of Classes **5, 7, 9, 10 and 11**
- More than one of Classes **14a and 14b**
- **Class 16** more than twice

This does not prevent competitors from entering one of these classes in combination with another class for which they are eligible (for example, entering both the Smallpipes Beginners class and Junior class is permitted). Entrants should refer to the guidelines for each class level.

Please also see specific class rules for eligibility below. Reference to competitions "at any venue" includes online or other remote entry competitions.

### ***Deadlines and format of entries***

Entries will be accepted up to the beginning of each class with the submission of a completed entry form, except for the following classes which require advance submission - **Classes 1, 2 & 16 (Overseas), and 3 & 4 (Composition/Variations)**.

Entries for those classes should be sent by email to [competitionentries@northumbrianpipers.org.uk](mailto:competitionentries@northumbrianpipers.org.uk), to arrive no later than **15<sup>th</sup> September 2023**. No late entries will be considered.

Playing class entries should be submitted in a standard audio file format such as MP3 or WAV or by means of a link to SoundCloud or a similar platform.

Composition class submissions must be by PDF copy of the manuscript (or standard image file

format such as JPEG or TIFF) and must be clearly legible. Any accompanying sound files may be considered at the discretion of the judge.

If sending large files, please consider sending via a file transfer services such as WeTransfer. Any emails blocked due to file size will result in entries not being judged. Please do not submit more tunes than are specified for the class - any extra tunes will be disregarded by the judge.

### **Variations**

For all classes where 'Variations' are required (playing Classes **1c, 2b, 11 and 14**, and Composition of Variations Class **4**), the following rules apply:

- Where the tune ground has two parts/strains, at least 3 variations are required in addition to the ground
- Where the tune ground has only one part/strain at least 5 variations are required in addition to the ground.

## **Classes**

### ***Class 1 Overseas – Smallpipes***

- a) **Beginner.** For those players not having previously won any competition on Northumbrian smallpipes. Two tunes of contrasting rhythms (preferably, a slow air + one of march, hornpipe, jig, or rant). Winners of this class may not re-enter.
- b) **Intermediate.** For those not having won any Open class on smallpipes, whether as overseas competitors or by attendance at competitions at any venue. Three tunes: one slow air + any two of march, hornpipe, jig, rant or reel. Any player winning this class three times, whether in successive years or not, is thereafter barred from further entry.
- c) **Open.** One tune with Variations (see note in general rules) + three other tunes of contrasting rhythms. A key change should be included. Winners in three successive years are barred from entry in the following year (only). Please refer to the guidelines regarding the expected playing standard for this class.

Please refer to ***Deadlines and format of entries*** in general rules.

### ***Class 2 Overseas - Border pipes (Half Longs or Lowland pipes)***

- a) **Beginner / intermediate.** For those players not having previously won a competition on Border pipes, except this one. Two tunes of contrasting rhythms. Any player winning this class three times, whether in successive years or not, is thereafter barred from further entry.
- b) **Open.** A tune with Variations (see note in general rules) + two other tunes of contrasting rhythms. Winners in three successive years are barred from entry the following year (only). Please refer to the guidelines regarding the expected playing standard for this class.

Please refer to ***Deadlines and format of entries*** above.

### ***Class 3 Composition***

For Bill Cassie trophy. An original tune that must be playable on the Northumbrian smallpipes, and must not have won any previous composition competition, at any venue. No competitor may enter more than two tunes. The Society reserves the right to publish any tunes submitted. Winners in three successive years are barred from entry in the following year (only). Please refer to ***Deadlines and format of entries*** in general rules.

### ***Class 4 Composition of Variations***

For Sunderland Trophy. A set of Variations (see note in general rules) to an existing, or original,

tune; which must be playable on the Northumbrian smallpipes, and must not have won any previous variation or composition competition, at any venue. No competitor may enter more than two sets. The Society reserves the right to publish entries. Winners in three successive years are barred from entry the following year (only). Please refer to ***Deadlines and format of entries*** in general rules.

### ***Class 5 Smallpipes Novice***

For Crystal Bowl donated by Derek Jarvis. Open only to members of the NPS. Competitors must have less than 2 years' piping experience of any kind and must not have won any type of bagpiping competition. Two tunes of own choice.

### ***Class 6 Smallpipes Junior***

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

### ***Class 7 Smallpipes Beginners***

For Thornton Cup. Open to those who have not won any Intermediate or Open competition (at any venue) or Class 10 Advanced, and who have less than five years' piping experience. Two tunes of own choice, of different rhythms. Previous winners of this class may not re-enter.

### ***Class 8 Blackthorn Stick Trophy***

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

### ***Class 9 Smallpipes Intermediate***

For Billy Pigg Trophy. Open to those who have not previously won this class, Class 10 Advanced, or an Open competition at any venue. Two tunes selected by the judge from a list of four submitted by the entrant. (1 jig, 1 reel, 1 hornpipe, 1 slow air). Previous winners of this class may not re-enter.

### ***Class 10 Smallpipes Advanced***

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. Any player winning this class three times, whether in successive years or not, is thereafter barred from further entry. Please refer to the guidelines regarding the expected playing standard for this class.

### ***Class 11 Smallpipes Open***

For Margaret Askew Cup and silver medal. Four tunes, including a tune with Variations (see note in general rules) and at least one key change. Winners in three successive years are barred from entry in the following year (only). Please refer to the guidelines regarding the expected playing standard for this class.

### ***Class 12 Duet for Smallpipes or Border pipes***

For Marjorie Bell Challenge Cup. Two tunes of own choice.

### ***Class 13 Mixed Duet/Ensemble***

For Pen Bal Crag Trophy. Two or more players - combination of smallpipes and/or Border pipes, and/or any other acoustic instrument(s). Two tunes of different rhythms. Melody on pipes, with only

rhythmic accompaniment by one other instrument is not appropriate. Larger groups may include a rhythmic element.

#### ***Class 14 Border pipes (Half Longs or Lowland pipes)***

- 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. Any player winning this class three times, whether in successive years or not, is thereafter barred from further entry.
- b) **Open.** For 'The Northumberland Half-Long Pipes' Cup, and Bronze Medal. One set of Variations (see note in general rules) + two other tunes of contrasting rhythms. Winners in three successive years are barred from entry in the following year (only). Please refer to the guidelines regarding the expected playing standard for this class.

#### ***Class 15 Pipe making***

For the Bill Hedworth trophy. A complete set of Northumbrian smallpipes 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 pipe makers, having won the trophy once, are debarred from further entry.

Please would entrants for this class make every effort to get their entry to the venue by 12.30 at the latest.

#### ***Class 16 Overseas – duet***

For either two players, or one player by the use of double-tracked recording. Each 'pair' must include either Northumbrian smallpipes or Border pipes, and the second instrument may be either another set of pipes – either type - or a different instrument. Two tunes of contrasting rhythms.

#### ***Class 17 Funky Tune composition***

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 entries should be able to be played on the Northumbrian smallpipes with the standard seven keys by a piper at lower intermediate level (ideally in the key of G). 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 smallpipes on the day of the competition. The class will be judged by volunteers from the competition audience on the day, selected by the judge, with the aim of young musicians acting as judges where possible. If an original tune, copyright to be licensed to 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.

# **Guidelines for competitors – NPS competitions**

## **General**

The committee felt that it would be helpful to offer competitors a few general guidelines, to ensure that they enter appropriate classes. These guidelines do not form part of the competition rules.

The guidelines also list a few of the 'typical' tunes that might be expected at each playing standard. This is in no way intended to be a set tune list for any class, nor does it preclude the selection of favourite tunes by competitors. The class titles that follow are those of the NPS competition; whilst they **may** be applicable to other events, competitors should use their own judgement as to whether levels at other competitions are equivalent. For those inexperienced in competition, seeking the advice of an experienced player / judge would be the best way to proceed. *All tune examples are taken from the NPS First Tunebook, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition.*

Judges have discretion to decide all classes as they see fit, but they may take into account technical ability on the one hand, and musicality on the other. Deciding factors may also include tuning, presentation, and a suitable choice of tunes for the class. Use of appropriate drone harmonies is to be encouraged. Although use of sheet music is not prohibited, the judge may consider it detracts from the performance particularly in classes beyond Novice/Beginners.

## **Novice**

This class is intended for those in their first season of competition, with necessarily limited repertoire and experience. Demonstrating control of the instrument – ability to tune, a steady bellows and bag action (to maintain constant pressure), and clean fingering are all that is required. Ornamentation and vibrato are not required, nor is digital agility expected.

*Because He was a Bonny Lad, Buttered Peas, Chevy Chase, Crooked Bawbee, Jimmy Allan, Lea Rigg, Mallorca, Noble Squire Dacre, Rothbury Hills, Whittingham Green Lane, Winster Gallop.*

## **Beginners**

By this stage difficulties with tuning and pressure should have been largely ironed out, and any evidence of open fingering removed. Progression to an exploration of more demanding tunes might be expected at beginner level, as might the **occasional** use of vibrato and grace notes. Whilst jigs and hornpipes etc. might well make an appearance in the beginners' competition repertoire, they would be slower than their dance speed and the keyword would be 'steadiness'.

*As above + Bidy the Bowl Wife, Bonny Cragside, The Cott, Herd on the Hill, Hesleyside Reel, Hexham Races, Holmes' Fancy, My Deary sits ower late up, Proudlock's Hornpipe, Saddle the Pony, Small Coals and Little Money, Sweet Hesleyside, Whinham's Reel.*

## **Intermediate**

The particular constraints imposed by the rules of this class make it (in the common estimation) one of the most difficult intermediate classes to enter. However, an intermediate player should be sufficiently removed from the technical difficulties of playing the pipes to be able to give some consideration to performance presentation, and the way a set of tunes fits together. Evidence of the development of a playing style, with appropriate ornamentation, should be apparent. Dance tunes should be brisker than in the beginner's class, though accuracy and rhythm should never be sacrificed to speed. Key changes might be considered.

*Archie's Fancy, Blackthorn Stick, Blow the Wind Southerly, Canny Newcastle, Friendly Visit, Lads of Alnwick, Lamb Skinet, Minstrel's Fancy, Nancy, Redesdale Hornpipe, Roxburgh Castle, Whinshields Hornpipe*

## **Advanced**

The advanced class was introduced to overcome the giant leap between intermediate standard and open class piping, and with the expectation that competitors will have previously won an Intermediate class (at any venue) or otherwise reached an equivalent playing standard. The class requires a key change, and consideration by the competitor of how to put a set of tunes together

appropriately. The way the player relates to the 'audience' is also a factor, the development of performance skills being seen as important to aspiring solo pipers.

### **Open**

The Open is primarily a performance class. The player is expected to use appropriate repertoire to demonstrate their mastery of technique and musicianship, as well as to perform their selection of tunes for the benefit of the audience. The requirement for a tune with Variations (and, for smallpipes, a key change) should be tastefully incorporated into the competitor's display. The actual selection of tunes, while based on the Northumbrian tradition, will naturally vary greatly, as players will have developed their own style and tastes. Competitors would usually enter the Open class having previously won an Intermediate class (at any venue) (or in relation to the smallpipes classes, the NPS Advanced class).

### **Pipes Duet and Mixed Duet/Ensemble**

Consideration will particularly be given to the competitors' choice of tunes, arrangements and their ability to provide an interesting and well-balanced performance.