

pipes | drums

Pipe-Major Gordon Meldrum (1945-2006)

Published: August 30, 2006

Pipe-Major Gordon Meldrum died suddenly on the morning of the August 28 at age 61.

Gordon, a resident of Braemar, was from a Fife piping family. His grandfather had planted the seed of interest in Gordon's father, Norman, who moved to Aberdeenshire to study with Bob Brown and Bob Nicol. With the latter Gordon struck up a strong relationship and gained a solid grounding in piobaireachd.

Upon joining the Queen's Own Highlanders, Gordon served under Pipe-Major Iain Morrison and Alasdair Reese. Directed by Captain John MacLellan, he completed his Pipe-Major's Course at Edinburgh Castle and passed the certificate with distinction. Gordon demonstrated his class as a player by winning the battalion's piobaireachd competition against a formidable field of competitors.

After his active army service, Gordon took up a teaching post at Alness Academy and Invergordon. He left Easter Ross to become one of the first instructors appointed by the Sultan of Oman during the 1980s for the formation of competitive bands. Following his return to Scotland he first settled in Achiltibuie, where he was instrumental in the project of forming a local piping school, before moving back to Aberdeenshire. His family home in Braemar became a haven for pipers of all levels to whom Gordon passed on his vast knowledge in the most generous and unassuming way. He taught and judged all over Scotland and Europe.

Gordon had an outstanding gift of setting up pipes with an equally sweet as melodious tone. Along with Nicol he had been reed-making and, a man of many practical abilities, this resulted in a solid understanding of the instrument's distinctive features. Gordon's musicality and highly expressive style of playing added most beautifully to his exceptional tonal abilities. He played several sets of MacDougalls, which he passed on to friends, and Hendersons, which he gave to pupils.

More interested in company and encouraging others than competing himself, Gordon was the most genuine and generous man one could have met. Another special gift of his was the great ability to make friends. His company was the best one could experience. Whatever he had, he shared it with others. Doing so, Gordon kept young throughout his life. Now he died far too young. Those who met Gordon will remember him with the greatest affection. The gratitude and respect for his life can not overcome it. He will be missed greatly. Braemar will never be the same again.

Condolences go to his entire family and numerous friends. Gordon is survived by his wife Phen, his

children Alex, Sarah, Anna and Cameron, his mother Stella, and his sister Norma.

The funeral details will be announced in time.

- *Submitted by Martin Kessler.*

p|d