

JIMMY CATHERWOOD -- PERCUSSIONIST/DRUMMER Part I

by Allan Chatto, Australia

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It is difficult to write a story on the life and times of Drum Major James Catherwood without showing the direction of the development and history of pipe band drumming as we know it today. Jimmy was, in the days even before the formation of The Scottish Pipe Band Association, a driving force in the teaching of the fundamentals of drumming, eventually devoting a lifetime to the pipe band movement and to percussion instruction. His influence is still felt today and over the years many of

his pupils and members of his drum corps were to become great innovative players, tutors and adjudicators. To date, I feel that Jimmy's story has not been fully told and the credit he rightly deserved may not have been accorded, hopefully, this article may, in some small measure, pay tribute to Jimmy for his great inspiration and friendly disposition which guided so many drummers along the right road, of their chosen instrument over so many years and which greatly benefitted the pipe band movement around the world.

Today, the pipe band may be considered to be a new art form with old roots, as a band consisting of pipers and drummers as we know it today, it has only existed in such form for around 120

years. An evolution over the past 65 years has seen many changes, the most significant being with pipe band drumming, developing in its own specialized way, so as to provide a pulsating, rhythmic and dynamic accompaniment; through the snare, tenor and bass drums; to the piping melody, thus producing a pleasant ensemble effect. One of the most significant contributors to this development was the late James Catherwood.

Jimmy has left a legacy after the number of years of his involvement in the pipe bands,

which many of today's drummers take for granted. Players around the world who knew, or corresponded with, Jimmy will always treasure his warmth of character, friendliness and willingness to assist and to discuss all forms of percussion with the beginner or the expert.

Born in Motherwell, Scotland, in 1907, he developed at an early age an interest in drumming--then, at the age of 12 years, he joined the Motherwell Company of the Boys Brigade. From then on he was soon in with the 'B.B.' Pipe Band and he received his first lessons from Jock Scott who was, some nine months later, to emigrate to the U.S.A., leaving Jimmy in charge of the drum corps' instruction. Three years on and this young drummer is now 15 years of age and greatly influenced by what the drummers in the adult bands of the day are playing and so he joined up with the Dalziel Highland Pipe Band at that time under the leadership of Pipe Major A. Hastie. The band's drumming instructor was John Duthart who had served with the 8th Bn. Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders during World War I playing the bass drum and, from time to time as the exigencies of the service demanded, playing a snare drum. Probably it is needless of me to say here that the same John Duthart was the father of the now late D/M Alex Duthart. Other notable drummers to emerge from the ranks of the 8th Bn. Argylls were D/M Charlie Davis, later leading drummer of Glasgow Corporation Transport Pipe Band and D/M John Seton of the City of Glasgow Police. John was a master of the rudiments of drumming and stick control together with the subtle use of expression and dynamics. This helped to lay down a firm foundation for Jimmy's drumming and musicianship, pointing him in a direction of disciplines which was to influence his playing in later years.

Jimmy eventually became leading drummer of Dalziel Highland, that was in 1922, and during the next few years the drum corps won every trophy available to them in contests on the Scottish Pipe Band circuit. During these wonderful years with Dalziel, Jimmy looked for

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newer and more varied ways to present his drum scores, he began to take an interest also in brass and military band drumming--and then there was orchestral percussion--Jimmy's spectrum of the whole music scene was enlarging at an ever-increasing pace or should I say, tempo! Seeking assistance now from Drum Major Alex Douglas Hamilton of

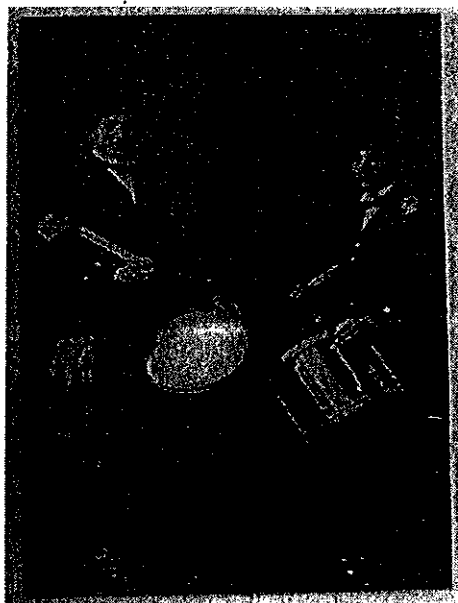
band and orchestral. At this period of time, 'A.D.' was a full-time professional drummer playing with various bands and orchestras of repute in the silent movie theaters in and around Glasgow. Alex, though heavily committed to professional engagements, guided Jimmy for some time and some years later he was appointed drumming instructor to Dalziel Highland with Jimmy still filling the role of leading drummer.

In 1931, A.D. Hamilton published a small drum tutor entitled "Drum Scores" and due to heavy demand it was soon out of print. Copies which are still in existence are greatly cherished by their owners. It is interesting to note that, prior to Alex's publication, drummers in pipe bands had to rely on tutors designed for British military bands such as "Potter's Drum, Flute and Bugle Tutor"--1886 (first published in 1817), and American publications such as Bruce & Emmett's "Drummers' and Fifers' Guide"--1865. It was not until 1922 that a tutor and collection of scores for the pipe band drummer was published. This publication was entitled "A Collection of Highland Bagpipe Music and Drum Scores" and was compiled by Pipe Major Willie Gray and Drum Major John Seton (ex-93rd Highlanders) both gentlemen were then members of the City of Glasgow Police Pipe Band. Whilst the rudimentary exercises and scores in this collection may seem elementary by today's standards, at this particular period within the pipe band movement, no other such

tutor existed.

Drummers who had a knowledge of music theory and notation used their own initiative to create their own teaching format based on the fundamentals, thereafter, grouping phrases to suit the melody. There were many 'stock scores' in use but Jimmy always strived to have individual scores composed to suit each pipe tune. With the emergence of the aforementioned publication it proved to be the dawn of a new era where drummers could see the advantage of learning about notation and setting down scores correctly so that they could, in turn, be easily understood, showing true note values which gave the time duration relationship between one note--or stroke--and another. Jimmy quickly learnt the fundamentals of music theory under the guidance of Alex D. Hamilton and this study opened up many avenues for him to expand his own theories on the sub-division of the beat-note together with the use of embellishments and dynamics. He was keen to contact or correspond with any other similarly minded drummers in order to propound his ideas and to expand his horizons in this new world of drumming. Other leading exponents of the art at this time were Dan Tarrant of the MacLean Band; Danny Faulds of Banknock & Hags and Charlie Davis of Glasgow Transport. Having had the opportunity to see a number of their scores from the 1927-1934 period, I note that they are extremely well written, very rhythmic

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*Jimmy Catherwood, Jim Dalrymple
Dalziel Highland Pipe Band, Oct. 1937*

Glasgow, better known as 'A.D.', a former drum major of the Seaforth Highlanders Pipes and Drums, having served in World War I and very interested in all forms of drumming, military, pipe

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with a good variety of rudiments of the period incorporated in these compositions.

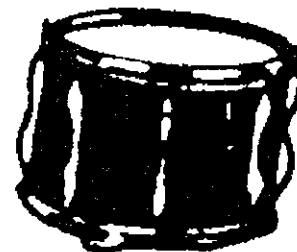
In 1931 with Jimmy now 24 years of age, he was very keen on trying to achieve a better snare drum sound to accompany the pipes. He learned that the 'Premier' drum company of the day was to release onto the market, a newly-developed rod tension drum--snare, tenor and bass. All the drums were individually tensioned, known as 'separate rod tension' and the snare drum was fitted with low profile metal counterhoops and top and bottom snares. This design permitted higher tension, giving cleaner staccato beating and the ability of the performer to create, and execute, good legato roll sounds. Jimmy convinced the Dalziel Highland Band Committee that the corps should have a full set of these new drums to play at the World Championships at Cowal

Dalziel had won the World Drumming Championships. Many other corps such as Glasgow Police, Glasgow Transport, MacLean and Ballochyle were soon to follow suit, changing over to rod tension drums which had proved to have much better pitch and they permitted faster execution of sticking.

Jimmy Catherwood now began to take a keener interest in percussion, and began a study of keyboard medium such as the xylophone. Meeting and discussing percussion with other drummers who had similar interests, talking about score arrangements and all attendant matters, Jimmy was in his element. He corresponded widely with his contemporaries, or he visited them and this led to firm friendships being established with such personalities of the day as D/M John Seton and his son Jack, leading stroke of the Glasgow Police, Alex MacCormick also of the Glasgow Police, Andy Darragh from Belfast, Paddy Donovan, leading drummer of the Fintan Lalor Band in Dublin and, of course, Alex D. Hamilton,

Looking overseas now, Jimmy began correspondence with Bill Ludwig in the U.S.A. and Bill had been instrumental in setting up 'The National American Rudimental Drummers' Association.' This body was set up in 1932 and they formulated the 'Twenty-six Standard American Rudiments.' Swiss Basle drumming also took up Jimmy's interest and in 1937 he visited Switzerland, meeting Dr. Fritz Berger who, in 1928 had developed the 'Monolinear System of Notation' for the ancient drumming displays of the City of Basle. This new system used a single line stave with the right hand stroke note symbol above the line and the left hand below. Jimmy saw great value in this system for the pipe band drummer so he returned to Scotland with some of Dr. Berger's manuals, Basle sticks and a long-shelled Basle marching drum. With this new material at hand it influenced Jimmy a great deal and others too became very interested: Alex MacCormick, Gordon Jelly and Ted Gilchrist to name but a few, and this interest was spreading furth of Scotland too--a new style and technique was emerging in pipe band drumming and so were the score arrangements, they were more suited to the melodies and development was quite rapid. It was at this juncture that Jimmy began to exploit and innovate and accented rolls from the Swiss Basle style were becoming more evident although the Swiss played an open roll sound rather than the closed Scottish legato roll sound, these groupings were found to be very effective, particularly in 6/8 march and 4/4 strathspey settings.

(Part II of Jimmy Catherwood's biography to continue in the next issue of IPBD)



Dalziel Highland Pipe Band after winning the Worlds Drumming Championship at Cowal, 1931. L/D Willie Vraig, D/Corp Jimmy Catherwood, Gordon Jelly, Willie Gadston, James Smith, Bass Willie Duthart (Alex's Uncle), Tenor T.Cowan.

Gathering later that year. Thus Dalziel Highland was the first band to play a full corps of these rod tension drums. At Cowal, the 'new sound' caused quite a sensation and, at the end of the day,

Glasgow. All these fellows were great innovators in this specialized art of pipe band drumming--this enhanced accompaniment in the pipe band--leading to greatly improved ensemble presentation.

JIMMY CATHERWOOD -- PERCUSSIONIST/DRUMMER PART II

BY ALLAN CHATTO, AUSTRALIA

Jimmy was an avid correspondent and wrote to percussionists around the world in order to increase his drumming knowledge--France and Sweden were just two of the countries where Jimmy corresponded in the international language of music. He corresponded regularly with Allan Bradford in Canada; Allan, originally from Belfast, N.I., was teaching a number of pipe band drummers in the Province of Ontario. He was equally keen as Jimmy in this sphere and he exchanged scores with Jack Seton, Paddy Donovan and many others on this side of the Atlantic. In 1939 Jimmy was appointed examiner in Scotland for the U.S. based National Association of Rudimentary Drummers, and he also conducted courses here on their behalf. One of the first candidates that Jimmy examined in 1939 was Alex MacCormick of the Glasgow Police. Alex and Jimmy were great pals in those days and they spent many hours together going over groupings and scores, creating variations and exchanging ideas. Jimmy would come over to Alex's home in Glasgow on a regular basis for the weekend, usually just managing to catch the last bus back home to Motherwell on the Sunday evening. Alex recalls . . . "One Sunday evening Jimmy missed the last bus home and ended up staying at my place for two weeks" . . . such was the character of Jimmy Catherwood.

A day in Jimmy's company was quite an experience what with sharing knowledge and ideas, discovering new sounds such as accented 1-4-7 groupings, then substituting drags or flams, accented rolls in various time signatures, both open and closed, and then, later compounding these elements into rhythmic drum scores and developing good stick control to give clean execution, rhythm and expression. Continuing his great interest within the pipe band movement after the formation of The Scottish Pipe Band Association in 1930, Jimmy, with others, saw the need for the formation of a drumming college to help all bands receive correct instruction in the fundamentals and to develop good technique. The Scottish Pipe Band Association, shortly after its formation, conducted its own 'Individual Solo Drumming Competition,' later to be known as 'The World's Solo Drumming Championship.' In January 1937 the winner was Charlie Davis, leading drummer of the Glasgow Corporation Transport P.B., Jimmy was placed second, playing scores written by Paddy Donovan and D/M A.D. Hamilton. It was interesting to note on the written scores, the tempo of the march was set for 'Met 112' . . . a very fast tempo indeed.

The Dalziel Highland Corps was still a major force in pipe band competitions right up to the commencement of the 1939-45 War. This tragic event slowed down quite appreciably the progress of the civilian pipe bands due to the enlistment of many members into the forces.

Prior to the aforementioned war, Jimmy had a great number of students coming to him for instruction but he continued his own musical edification by studying further percussion, learning the marimba and orchestral kit drums. He became very proficient at these items and was later to become one of the foremost teachers in this department. After the commencement of the war, Jimmy continued to play with Dalziel until 1941 when he moved to Edinburgh and subsequently joined the Edinburgh City Police and, of course, shortly afterwards he was enrolled in the pipe band of that force. He took over from leading drummer, the late D/M John Ferguson who had now enlisted in the Army, serving with the Cameron Highlanders and Seaforth's Pipes and Drums. It is interesting to note here that when Jimmy left Dalziel, young Gordon Jelly, one of his pupils, took over as his successor and was later on to become leading drummer of Shotts and Dykehead and Bucksburn and District Pipe Bands before emigrating to Australia. Another young drummer then joining the ranks of Dalziel in 1942 was 17-year-old Alex Duthart, destined to follow in Jimmy's footsteps with the same dedication and enthusiasm. He was later to become many times World Solo Champion and leader of world champion corps.

On the cessation of hostilities the pipe band movement slowly regained its previous standing--old bands reformed and new bands emerged. During the war the Scottish Regiments had many pipes and drums and, players returning to civilian life helped to resuscitate many bands and, of course, the movement as a whole. New names were now being talked about and the pipe band 'scene' began to regain its full colour with Jimmy still developing new ideas and concepts with his Edinburgh Police Corps and with the large number of pupils he had in the Edinburgh and Lothian area. He was, by then, much in demand as an instructor of percussion at a number of school and colleges. In 1947 Jimmy Catherwood took over as instructor of Newtongrange Senior and Juvenile Bands and his skills in this direction were soon evident with both bands attaining championship ratings. As a result of this very successful instruction, the Newtongrange Juveniles won the World Juvenile title in 1947 and 1948. In 1948 Jimmy tied for 1st place in the SPBA World Solo Event and had the pleasure of seeing his pupils complete the prize list, annexing the 3rd, 4th and 5th placings against 53 contestants from all over Scotland.

With the resurgence of interest in pipe bands, the British Broadcasting Corporation continued its live broadcasts of pipe band music on the radio, a feature which was inaugurated in 1937 with the Glasgow and Edinburgh Police forces

"A day in Jimmy's company was quite an experience what with sharing knowledge and ideas..."

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"At the age of 76 years, Jimmy was laid to rest on a calm, sunny day on Tuesday, 8th November 1983."

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pipe bands. Recordings of pipe bands were also now available and, during 1950, the Universal Artistes Recording Company from London released a number of high quality 78 r.p.m. recordings featuring the Edinburgh City Police Pipe Band under P/M Donald Shaw Ramsay and L/D Jimmy Catherwood. The collection of recordings include solo piping by D.S. Ramsay and two recordings with four drummers each playing their solo scores with D.S. Ramsay. The four drummers were Jimmy Catherwood, Alex Duthart, Gordon Jelly and, finally, James Blackley of Edinburgh Special Constabulary Pipe Band. This collection provides a permanent record, so to speak, of these great players, their scores and their presentation techniques.

From this time on, other pipe band recordings were released in the U.K. and overseas. Publications now also appeared for the benefit of the piper and the drummer but Jimmy never did publish a tutor or manual of his own. He was instrumental in giving advice and submitting contributions towards the publication of the SPBA Tutor Vol. 1 (1962) and some of his scores are in print in John Seton's '50 Years Behind the Drum' (1954) and also in 'The Edcath Collection' which was published in 1953.

Again, Jimmy was in constant demand as a drum and percussion instructor and, when at the age of 47, on retreat from the Edinburgh Police Force, he took up a full-time appointment of teacher of percussion at George Heriot's School in Edinburgh. His stay at the school was to last 26 years and in that time he had countless successes with pupils competing in the Scottish Schools Combined Cadet Force Band and solo drumming events. In addition, there was a college exchange visit between Scotland and U.S.A. arranged on a bi-annual basis and his pupils could always be relied upon to 'shine' in that field.

The subject of this article was on great terms with many of the world's leading orchestral percussionists and drummers and when they visited Scotland, Jimmy was always welcomed by them and he would be invited to 'sit in' on rehearsals and performances. He made many trips abroad to countries such as U.S.A., Canada, France and Sweden. He was always at ease talking with drummers and musicians in all musical idioms, and he freely gave seminars and workshops wherever he visited. His home was always 'open house' to drummers where ideas were freely discussed and exchanged at all levels of competency. A perfectionist for technique and musicality, which he maintained should never be sacrificed for the sake of a 'drumnastics display.' He always considered that the percussion accompaniment to the pipe melody with

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expressive rhythmic presentation and the subtle use of dynamics and syncopation were, essentially, the drummers' prerequisite.

All through his life he experimented with, and achieved, different drum sounds and, in this context, he had a hobby-cum-business making and supplying side, tenor and bass drum sticks to drummers around the world. Without doubt, Jimmy Catherwood's contribution to drumming and percussion is immeasurable just as his love

of pipe bands was also measureless. With his passing we said farewell to probably one of the finest and dedicated teachers since the advent of pipe bands and his life was devoted to the movement and, of course, to percussion.

At the age of 76 years, Jimmy was laid to rest on a calm, sunny day on Tuesday, 8th November 1983. A large gathering of friends attended to pay their last respects and to display a fine tribute to a truly great man.

ROLLS, STROKES AND STROKE ROLLS

BY ALEX McCORMICK

To sustain a sound on the drum, the drummer plays what is known as a roll. Collins Encyclopedia of Music describes a roll as a succession of notes played on a drum so rapidly that it approximates to a continuous sound. When I was being taught, my teacher described a good roll as being a close, even sound, devoid of pulsation. The exercise to achieve this sound was popularly known as the Daddy Mammy exercise. It is designed to develop flexibility in stick control. Starting slowly, the drummer plays two strokes with each hand alternately, gradually increasing the speed until a close even roll is produced. It is imperative that the strokes are evenly spaced and the volume of each hand the same throughout the exercise. When listening to a competent drummer playing this exercise, the strokes are quite clearly heard at high speed, however a point is reached when they can no longer be heard as individual strokes. Each stick is now making a buzz or slurring sound which, when merged, produces a close even roll.

In the Drumming Instruction Manual (D.I.M.) of the Australian Federation Drumming College, the section dealing with the development of the roll, states these slurs are multiple rebound bounces and further states, and I quote: "The number of slurs or multiple stroke bounces to be played within a roll tie, is dependent on the note value, the tempo and the ability of the performer." The R.S.P.B.A. Tutor, Vol. 1, has a statement along similar lines. Drummers who use the stroke roll system in pipe bands should pay close attention to the previous quote; however, as we are dealing with the long roll, the question of strokes does not arise.

The shorter rolls are represented in drum scores by 1/16, 1/8 and 1/4 notes, and it is in this area that the expression "stroke rolls" is used. We hear rolls referred to as 5s, 7s, 9s, etc. Why are they so called? It appears they are so named because of the number of strokes in the "open" movement of the exercises which produce these rolls. This, in my opinion, is not sound reasoning, for while the exercise may start with 5, 7 or 9 strokes, when the slur stage is reached (multiple rebound bounces), it is impossible to hear individual strokes; furthermore, the use of the word multiple suggests more than two strokes with each stick. To count each slur as 2 strokes is, therefore, incorrect, and to assume that all

rolls are counted in 1/32 notes is a false assumption.

Dr. Fritz Berger in his book *Instructor for Basle Drumming* states: "a roll is always a drum figure in 1/32 notes." There is also a table of rolls in this book which shows a 3 stroke roll as 2 x 1/32 notes tied to a terminal stroke. This in effect is a one slur 1/16 note tied to a final stroke. Pipe band drummers today play 1/16 note rolls using 2 slurs, which make them 5 stroke rolls. Why should rolls be counted in 1/32 notes? One thing is certain, present day pipe band drummers can play groups of 1/32 notes clearly and rhythmically without trace of a roll, so maybe the roll could be counted in 1/64 notes or notes of shorter duration, but why count strokes at all? The important thing is to produce a close even roll for the value of the note in relation to the time signature and the tempo. It must always be remembered that an 1/8 note roll is always an 2/8 note roll, but an 1/8 note roll is not always a 5 stroke roll.

By kind permission of the A.F.P.B.A. Drumming College, I've enclosed a table of rolls taken from the D.I.M. The first column shows the written roll, the second the stroke name, and the third the stick movements. In the third column, each note with the short strokes across the stem represents slurs, and each slur counts 2 strokes. It will be seen from the table that the number of slurs for each roll is calculated on the relationship of each note to the 1/8 note roll; e.g., the 1/8 note has 2 slurs, the dotted 1/8 note 3 slurs, 1/4 note 4 slurs and so on. It's well known that competent pipe band drummers play 1/8 note rolls in marches and selections as 7 stroke rolls--3 slurs and a final stroke. If we draw up a table of rolls starting with the 1/8 note roll as a 7 stroke roll, by using the same formula we find the 1/4 note roll is now a 13 stroke roll and the 1/2 note roll is now a 25 stroke roll. This is all good and well, but what about the dotted note rolls? We find ourselves calculating in half slurs and trying to play "half a slur" is like trying to dig "half a hole"--you can't. A slur is a slur and counts 2 strokes.

In my opinion the expression "stroke rolls" should be deleted from all pipe band publications and all rolls should be known by their note name. I've never heard the 3 page introductory

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Alex McCormick is by far, one of the most famous names in pipe band drumming. Now living in Melbourne, Australia, Alex's contributions both in Scotland and Australia have had long-lasting effects which withstand the pressure of time and environmental changes.