B.C. Pipers Association (BCPA)

http://www.bcpipers.org/

The BCPA has carried out a great variety of other activities since its inception: lectures, seminars, workshops, trio knock-out competitions, composition contests, visits to Victoria, and a trip to Scotland.

Prior to the formation of the B.C. Pipers Association (BCPA) piping societies had briefly existed in Vancouver: a Pipers' Society in 1905 and the Vancouver Pipers' Society in 1921. Neither appeared to last long or make much headway. Piping was otherwise largely in the hands of the several local pipe hands, dedicated performers and teachers, and was encouraged by the Vancouver St. Andrews & Caledonian Society, which held annual games. The Beginning of the BCPA The need for an organization to promote all aspects of the Great Highland Bagpipe was sorely felt by a handful of enthusiasts and on July 30, 1932 the inaugural meeting of the BCPA was held. At this meeting, held at the Vancouver Police Station, Rod MacLeod was elected as president. Some of the charter members were William Urquhart, William MacIndewar, John Paul, John Gillies, Allan MacNab, James Robertson, Ed Esson and William Bowes? Open and Amateur players, band members and teachers, - a real cross section of the local piping community.Barely 3 1/2 months later, on Nov. 19, 1932, the 1st Annual Gathering (AG), grandiosely described as the "Grand Inaugural Highland Gathering and Bag Pipe Playing Competition" took place at the Elks Hall. Ten events, all solo piping, were held, entry fees were 25 cents per event, and admission to the hall was 50 cents. All competitors in Highland costume were admitted free, and a special prize was awarded to the best dressed competitor.It is probable that our founding fathers considered the Association to be of province-wide significance, considering they described it "British Columbia". On records is a 1940 letter from the Vancouver Island Pipers' Society, which is described as an affiliate of the BCPA. The letter was promoting the annual re-union of the B.C. Pipers. While it is not known how long this association lasted, by the 1960s the Vancouver Island Pipers' Club flourished in Victoria, as an independent group.On the programme of the 1932 AG is depicted a crest similar to our present one, with the Piper's left side portrayed. The motto "Tog Orm Mo Phiob"(To shoulder my pipes) appeared on this early crest, likely inspired by Rod MacLeod. By 1933 our crest in its present form was adopted.Initially the competitions were organized into Novice, Ladies, Under 16, 16 and Over and Open (or Professional). These categories were devised at a time when there were few female competitors and they were regarded as weaker players. By the 1950's, when such Ladies as Isobel MacLean and Norma Nicholson had cleaned up in both the Ladies and the Amateur classes the inequality no longer existed, and the ladies class was discontinued In 1958 the Assn. re-organized the Amateur classes into Novice, Juvenile, Junior and Senior Amateur. This accommodated late starters, and enabled players to compete against their peers, irrespective of age. Finally in 1995 the classes were once again changed, into Grades 1, 2, 3 and 4, Grade 1 being the highest level.Needless to say, the BCPA was dirt poor in the 1930's. The depression had hit everybody, membership was not large, and the sources of revenue were scanty In fact, silver-tongued Rod MacLeod persuaded competitors to play for ribbons in the early years. By 1936 the Financial Report showing a bank balance of $102.90 was accepted with pleasure. As the Association got more affluent merchandise prizes were obtained for all events. By the 1970s Open Competitors received money prizes and Amateurs received medals. Now Open Players vie for trips to Scotland, slightly more generous than ribbons.

Grouping: Pipeband
State: BC
Country: CA
Year-Joined: 2012
UL Rank (1 is highest, 4 is lowest): 4

Date created: 10/15/2007