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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Bag Pipe Lamp From Waterloo

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I SAW a most unusual lamp recently in the home of Hugh MacPherson, Wood Islands. A Former piper who played 14 years with a big Massachusetts band, Mr. MacPherson made the lamp upright from the large drone of a set of bag pipes played in the battle of Waterloo.

But the most interesting part is that the center of the drone was shattered by the bullet that killed the piper. The 146-year-old story says the piper maintained the finest traditions of Scottish bravery and continued to play until he fell dead on the field.

Dr. Martin MacDonald, formerly of Brookfield but now in the U.S., got the pipes from his brother Wilfred, also a doctor. The brothers are cousins of Mrs. MacPherson, the former Mamie "Moses" MacDonald of Springton - the nickname comes from her father - but she couldn't tell me where or how Dr. Wilfred got the pipes.

THE MACPHERSONS had celebrated their 59th wedding anniversary with relatives in Halifax a few weeks before I called. But the beautiful wedding cake - it was in two pieces which together spelled out 59 - was still untouched.

"It's too pretty to eat" I suggested and the lovely lady with the sunny smile replied "No, it's too pretty to cut", which means close to the same thing.

The cake was supplied by their niece, Mrs. Rhoda MacPherson Bethune, Halifax who is a daughter of Mr. And Mrs. Alexander MacPherson, Bellevue.

Another lamp attracted my attention. It was made by Pipe Major Harold Sutherland, Westville, N.S who lived here for a time. The central figure is a piper in Highland costume, complete with pipes. And it was all made from plastic by Harold, who is pretty well known in piping circles here.

Queens County Liberal Activity

ADD E.D.REID to the list of those who will not be available as a Liberal candidate for Queens. The Charlottetown farm machinery and produce dealer cannot afford to leave his growing business interests for a job that would take him away from them for seven months, or more each year.

A County convention should be called soon, I suggest, as many people look for a federal election early in the new year. The resignation of Brigadier G.G.R.Peake as Queens County president will delay planning, but it can be resumed again when a new president is chosen late in January.

MR. PEAKE was not present at the Queens County annual meeting where he was chosen as president, and I think I should tell you why. Mrs. Peake, the former Margaret Sterns, at that time was facing what they feared would be a most serious operation.

Fortunately the operation was completely successful and Mrs. Peake is coming along fine. But I think you can understand why he passed up the meeting.

Dish From Boiled Middlings

HAVING READ my “sthapachk” story of the thick cream and oatmeal dish, J.A.MacKenzie, Kensington wants me to ask if any reader ever heard of another Scotch dish known as “Sowens” or possibly “Zowens”. He’s not sure of the spelling.

It was made from the juice of the middlings of oats. Apparently the middlings were boiled, and the juice skimmed off and allowed to set into a jelly like consistency.

A Murray River man, whose story will appear here later, tells me he thinks the gaelic word for it sounded like “Keirach” and, of course, that’s only an attempt at a phonetic spelling.

I’d be glad to hear from anyone who knows about such a dish, and I know Mr. MacKenzie is anxiously awaiting reactions from column readers.

Must Be Champion ‘Big Hog’ Story

NORMAN LOWTHER QC wrote me this week, and I think the Richmond Street lawyer must have the champion of the ‘big hog’ stories. His quoted authority is Pollard’s Historical Sketch of P.E.I., page 64 dealing with events in 1828.

Numerous people who “crowded around gazed with admiration...on the animal penned up in the back yard of a public inn, taking his rest and grunting to his satisfaction, at this interesting visitor who was generally known by the high sounding appellation of ‘Stewart’s pig’ as he was raised by Peter Stewart, Hillsborough River.”the item said.

His proportions were “length 9 feet, 6 inches; girt 7 feet, 4 inches; he was five feet around the neck, and three feet 11 inches tall and weighed upwards of 1,000 pounds.”

HE WAS sold for 19 pounds, Island currency and, as Mr. Lowther observes, that was a lot of money in those days

Stewart Eagles tells me that an average length Yorkshire girting 41 inches will weigh 200 pounds alive and hit somewhere close to the top acceptable dressed Grade A weight of 170 lbs. If you want a further comparison, a beautiful dark bay horse in our stable girts 80 inches and weighs around 1400 lbs. He’s just about the biggest standard bred horse I’ve ever seen - he’s a son of Playdale - yet this fantastic monster of the swine world girted eight inches more.

As I’ve said, I think my friend Mr. Lowther must have the champion big pig yarn.

Collection Seen At Alliston

A LOOK at a most unusual collection of Salt and Pepper shakers, and one of recipes, was my reward for calling recently on the Bert Hickens at Alliston, which is not far from Montague.

I called to see Bert about his blueberry production - he gets a ton to the acre on roughly 20 acres - but stayed to view Mrs. Hicken's hobbies when I learned Bert was away.

Neither item would normally be interesting to a male but I think I enjoyed them as much as did Mrs. Matheson, who was with me on the day's story hunt.

The Alliston lady had 187 sets of the Salt and Pepper shakers and none of them even closely resembled the other. She's been collecting them for six years and by now, I imagine, the Christmas season has likely added to her list.

THERE'S A Bird's Eye Maple set made in Dorchester Penitentiary. She has a beautiful set made of California Redwood. Another set features an old fashioned motor car, of 1920 vintage or earlier.

A mallet-type set is really fancy. She has a plastic set that's a good imitation of Spode China. There are Totem Pole birds. There's a set from the Barbados with tiny shells set into Plaster of Paris and another unusual set features Grace for before and after meals.

The collection started in an open faced cupboard in one corner of the room but it has long since outgrown that accommodation.

Mrs. Hicken also collects recipes. She has a carefully catalogued list of 800 tested recipes. "I love cooking", she told us, and the Mathesons can vouch for her culinary artistry for we had a wonderful meal with the Hickens several years ago.

In addition she has a 12-volume encyclopaedia with 3,000 recipes along with several single volumes. There must be a great deal of variety on the Hicken table.

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As this is the last column before Christmas I want to extend best wishes to readers everywhere. Unfortunately it cannot be merry for everyone, but my hope is that the season will bring the greatest share of happiness that is possible at this time.