

## **PM Archie Cairns Introduced Piobaireachd to the Intermountain Branch**

By Susan M. Thornton, MS

Major Archie Cairns, MMM, CD, from London, Ontario, Canada, brought piobaireachd to the Intermountain Branch, with intensive weekend workshops from 1991-1995.

Denver piper Alex MacIntosh had heard of PM Cairns' extensive piping background and multiple honors, and invited him to the Denver area to teach piobaireachd.

Most of us were complete piobaireachd newbies, never having heard of piobaireachd, much less Breabach, Conventional or Fosgaith tunes, had no idea what a regular or irregular piobaireachd was, and having never heard of a dithis, hiharin, dre or dare – much less a crunluath or a crunlouath a mach.

Archie, with his wonderfully deep, melodiously singing voice, took the music off the paper and made it come alive, showing us how to read and sing it, then translate it to our fingers.

He also told wonderful stories of the origin of piobaireachd and those who went before us. For example, he said that *Mackintosh's Lament* was written after an ill-fated Macintosh was thrown from his horse and killed on his wedding day. The ground was said to have been sung by his bride at his funeral.

*Lament for the Children* was written after seven sons in the same family died. It expresses the despair of their parents.

PM Cairns shared his controversial belief that the origins of piobaireachd came from a monk who immigrated from Cremona, Italy, to Ireland and from there to Scotland, where it continued to evolve.

PM Cairns' teachings made an indelible and lasting impact on all who attended his workshops. Thanks to PM Archie Cairns, piobaireachd is alive and well in the Intermountain Branch!

**Alex MacIntosh remembers** ---- *To read an interview with PM Cairns about piping and drumming from a judge's perspective, please see the attached.*