



The band's first-ever parade on St. Patrick's Day, 1963.

retired Brothers in their home which turned into an emotional occasion for some of the Brothers. When we finished here, our next engagement was in the school hall again, this time for the parents only.

Afterwards there was a reception for the parents, where they were presented with their gifts supplied by the band. The gift was a specially-made clock and horseshoe. The two members of the band which stayed with each couple got their photograph taken with Brother Casey and Brother Power, principal of Sexton Street CBS, which was a very happy occasion. Also on that night, Matt Kelly spoke to Gerry Kennedy, who had written a poem six years ago when the band last came, entitled: "The Sexton Street Boys."

The Sexton Street boys put down the toys and picked up the pipes and the drums. They came to a new land and struck up the great band near a church built by Old Ennis Sons. The sound was so grand the boys became famous. They stirred crowds to wipe tears from their eyes. They marched up the street to the drummers march beat. The Sexton Street boys had arrived. The kilts briskly wavered, the pipes have quavered. The drum majors mace touched the sky. The band looked so regal and the boys their banners up high. Said a man to his son, "there's the pipers from Limerick and it's over the ocean they've come. Savour the sight you see today, it's your brothers from Ireland," and mothers and fathers, sisters and aunts went on to parties where their hearts were filled with the wonders and joys of the Sexton Street Boys.

Also that night, Kevin Ronan, band leader, thanked the families on his behalf and on behalf of the Sexton Street parents council. He also thanked the Brothers who we had enjoyed so much especially Brother Ralph Montedoro, Principal of CBA. Brother Casey spoke again thanking the families for looking after us so good in the last few days.

Homes

During that night, Matt Kelly interviewed Mrs. Cathy Bracken, chairperson of the parents council, CBA, and he asked how she got the band to come over again. She said that she attended a meeting of the women's guild, a big organisation and she explained to them that homes would be needed for us on our stay.

This occasion was a Christmas party and many parents signed up immediately.

On Monday, 16th, the 5th day, the band went on a tour of the Big Apple (NYC), during that time we went on a ferry

CBS pipers charm American crowds

The CBS Pipe Band's trip to America has been a triumphal one, for success to make this trip a memorable occasion, a lot of organising had to be done, fund-raising events, draws, etc.

On two occasions, the band organised a disco, one on December 23rd in the Glentworth Hotel, which drew a large crowd and a lot of money because it was the Christmas spirit.

The second was held in Cheers Nightclub in the Desmond Arms, but due to the time of year, especially with examinations on the way, the second disco didn't receive the crowd that we expected as on Friday's usually there are other discos in different venues, so the band's disco flopped in this way.

Also to achieve the large amount to subsidise the trip another brilliant idea was thought of by Brother Casey, the Brother in charge of the band. The plan was to run a draw which would continue for six months, simply called a 500 Draw Club. Each family was distributed with 10 cards, costing £50 each, which ended at the end of April.

There was a raffle held in the school, the first prize a trip for two to America and prizes of money for second and third prizes. The draw was run at the end of February into early March, during which £3,000 was raised and as Brother Casey said, the band's account in the bank on the day before departure was £22,000.

During early January, a group photograph was taken in the Monastery backyard, Jan. 15th, to advertise the fact that the band needed funds. Also, in this article was a list of the venues which the band would be appearing at while in the States and also the previous trips abroad which the band had undertaken, including Scotland, France and Germany. The article also indicated that anyone who was willing to help raise funds, were to contact Bro. Casey or Mr. Ger Browne, committee member of the band.

Parents

The following are the parents who came with the band as leaders and guides: Mrs. Maura Jones, Ger Browne, Mrs. Marie

Gorman, Joe O'Flynn, Mrs. Marie Hayes, Pat O'Connell, Barry Carey (former drum sergeant, late 1970's).

In early March, prior to the trip, there was a Mayoral reception for the members of the band held in the Civic Buildings by the Mayor of Limerick, Ald. Jim Kemmy. A number of the band attended including Michael O'Connell, drum sergeant; Martin Hayes, pipe major; and David Higgins, drum major.

Justin Fitzgerald takes up the story:

On the eve of our departure, March 11th, the annual Mass was held in the chapel of the Monastery. The Mass was celebrated by Fr. Joe Young, and chaplain, who gave the band a special blessing on our journey. The Mass was held for band members and their parents.

The big day arrived. On Thursday, March 12th, the band departed the Christian Brothers School in Sexton Street, Limerick, at approx. 11 p.m. for Shannon Airport. On arrival at the airport, we handed in our luggage and some went to the duty free shop. Our flight was at 2.30 p.m., flight number 105. During our time on the plane, we received lunch and beverages. After an enjoyable 6 1/2 hour flight, we arrived in JFK Airport, New York, at about 5 p.m. (American time).

We had then to travel about 600 miles to the Christian Brothers Academy in a place called Lincraft in New Jersey, which is situated on 160 acres of land. It was a boys school which was run by the De La Salle Brothers. It was opened in 1959 and the property was bought by the former pupils of the primary, secondary, colleges and universities of the areas which Brother Tim Tarney explained to Matt Kelly. When we arrived we met our host families, Brother Ralph Montedoro, Principal of CBA, greeted us on our arrival into the school

and made a speech describing the occasion in 1986 and how he looked forward to hearing us play the following day.

School

On Friday, 13th, some of the boys of the band attended school which began at 8.30 a.m. with prayers, and some didn't.

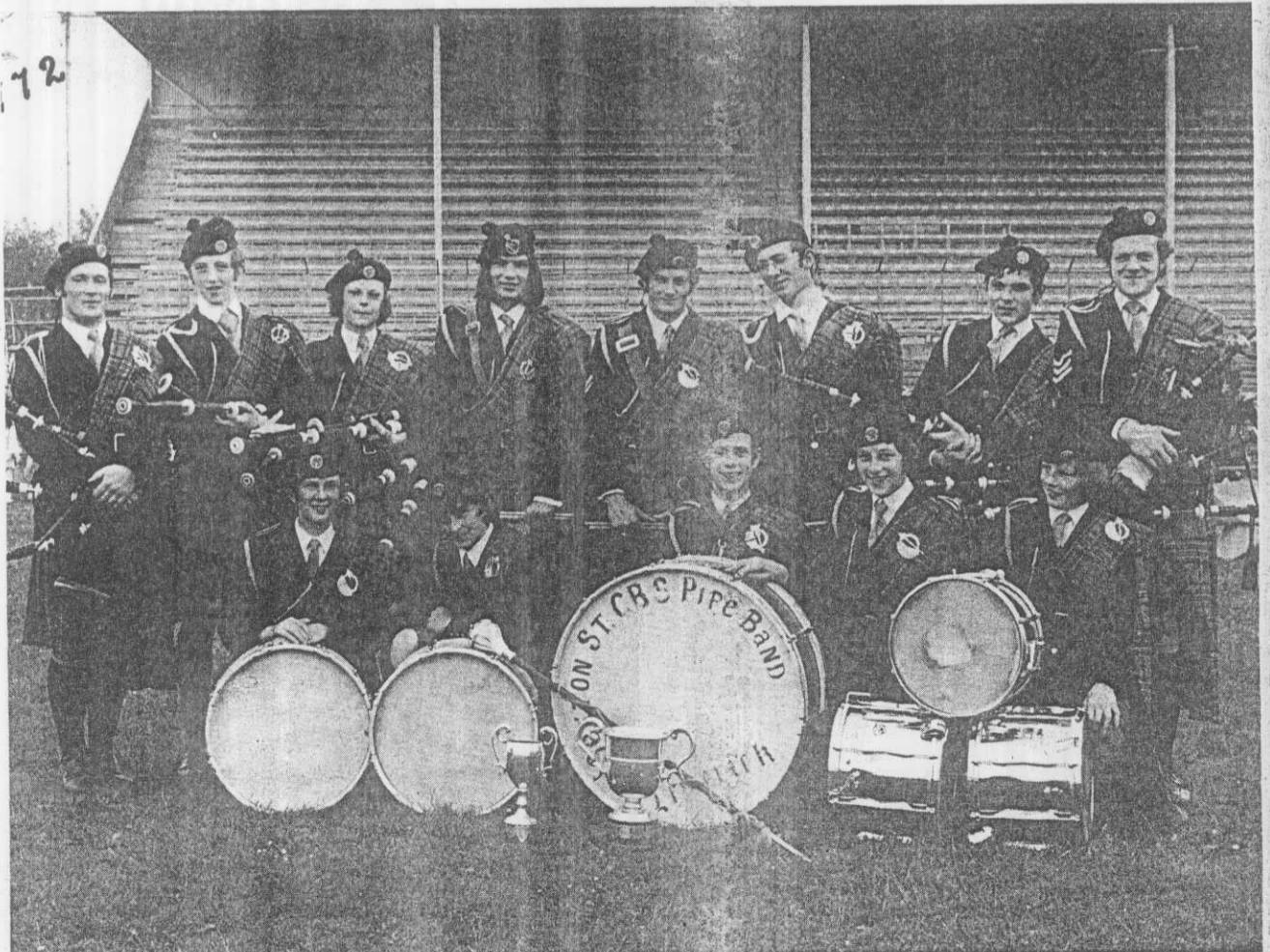
Then at 1.30 p.m. the band performed its first engagement in the US by playing in the school gym for the host families and the boys attending the Academy for which we got a standing ovation.

On Saturday, 14th, the third day, the band went to the Academy at 8 a.m. and from there we travelled to our first

parade which was in Lower Bucks, in Pennsylvania, which was a long parade, and the second parade, which was in the capital of New Jersey, Trenton. Both parades were enjoyable with warm weather.

On Sunday, 15th, the 4th day, the band attended 9 a.m. Mass in Coltsneck, New Jersey. While Holy Communion was being received by the congregation, Martin Hayes, Pipe-Major, played Amazing Grace as a solo, standing on the altar. Our first parade that day was in West Orange, and the second parade was in Woodbridge, both again were warm and sunny parades.

On arrival back at the Academy we played for the



Munster champions in 1972.



Marching past St. Patrick's Cathedral on Fifth Avenue, New York.

over to the Statue of Liberty and then to Ellis Island where the emigrants came in the 1800's during the famine. Afterwards the band went to visit the World Trade Centre, and we saw a great view of New York including the length of 5th Avenue.

Finally the big day had arrived, St. Patrick's Day, in New York City. On March 17th the band got 8.30 a.m. Mass in St. Patrick's Cathedral which was celebrated by Cardinal J. O'Connor. After Mass we played on the steps of the most famous cathedral of the world. The band's photograph was taken by almost every photographer in New York. Afterwards a group of us got our photograph taken together with Brother Power for The Irish Echo. Included in the photograph are myself, David Higgins, Brian O'Connell and Eamonn McNamara.

Before the parade, Brother Casey was interviewed by the press and radio and he was asked about our tunes, especially "The Dawning of the Day." He explained to them that the last time we were in America the tunes were Scottish, and

they had to be changed. He also told the interviewer that it was bad enough that we were wearing a Royal Stewart tartan never mind playing Scottish tunes, but he explained that the band would only play Irish tunes today.

Then the big moment came, at about 1 p.m. the CBS Pipe Band marched down Fifth Avenue where the crowds were about three deep for the full length of the avenue. The length of the parade was about three miles long but it was a once-in-a-lifetime dream.

Wednesday, 18th, was a free day for the band which we spent in New York City. During that day, we went to visit the Aircraft Museum on West 46th Street and 12th Avenue, New York. In the Museum there were ships, submarines and aircrafts. We spent the full day in this area which was very enjoyable. There were organised tours of each item so we didn't get lost. Afterwards we went back to New Jersey via Woodbridge.

Thursday, 19th: This was the day we stayed with the families. During my trip, I went out for

dinner to the local golf club with the family and Michael O'Connell, my partner during the trip. Afterwards we went into the town for the rest of the day shopping for our families.

Friday, 20th, the day of departure. We arrived at the Academy at 1 p.m. We left CBA at 2 p.m. and then arrived in JFK at 4.30 p.m. We checked in, and our flight was at 7.30 p.m. on flight 104 and we arrived in Shannon at 6.15 a.m. (sat.) and then back into Limerick city where we arrived in Sexton Street CBS at 7.30 a.m.

So after our six months preparing for this journey, it finally was finished and every boy in our band really enjoyed themselves.

Next March 17th the CBS Pipe Band will be celebrating 30 years of providing Limerick with one of Ireland's best-known pipe bands.

I'd like to thank Brother Casey for all his help in making this trip to America possible. Also, a special thanks to David O'Connell for all the help he gave me in telling this story.

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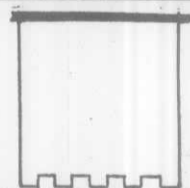
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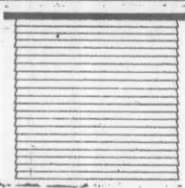
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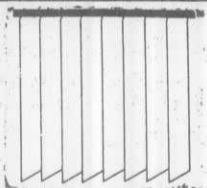
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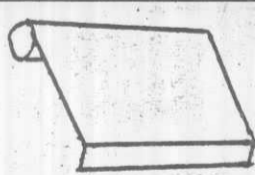
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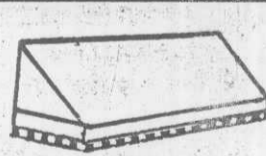
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