

BARRY ROWLANDS

Barry has had a life long interest in Pipe Band Drumming since he left an Air League Band and joined Lakemba Pipe Band as a learner drummer in 1946. In 1948 he joined the NSW Police Department and Police Pipe Band as a 16 year old Cadet, and within 12 months was appointed Leading Drummer of the Band. For the next six years, in addition to Band duties, he was Principal Drumming Instructor at three Police Boys Club Pipe Bands located at Balmain, Fairfield and Parramatta.

In early 1954, Barry resigned from the Police to follow a business career, and in the process, joined Sydney Thistle Pipe Band. Shortly after, he was appointed Leading Drummer, and over the next five years the Drum Corps won 32 Championship Titles at various Highland Gatherings.

It was during this period in 1958, that five experienced bandsmen got together and established the NSW Pipe Band Association, the forerunner of the present day Organisation. Barry was the inaugural Secretary, and of the five original Committee men, Barry is the only surviving member. In 1962 he was appointed to the Drumming Adjudication Panel, and is still an active member some 56 years later.

Due to a career promotion, Barry was transferred in 1959 to Northern NSW and his Pipe Band activities ceased, then followed a further transfer to Victoria in 1967. This resulted in a very enjoyable four year period playing with the City of Melbourne Highland Pipe Band as their Leading Drummer.

Shortly after returning to Sydney in 1971, Barry was invited to rejoin the NSW Police Pipe Band as a prelude to the Band's visit to the UK in 1975. This involved taking over lead of the Drum Corps, writing drum scores for the Australian State Police Pipe Bands, and resuming teaching at the Police Boys Club Pipe Bands. In England the Band played at The Royal Tournament at Earls Court, the Searchlight Tattoo at Colchester, and the Edinburgh Tattoo.

After returning to Australia, business commitments required Barry to leave the Police Band, but in 1976, he rejoined Sydney Thistle Band until retiring from active playing in 1980.

Barry is a Life Member of Sydney Thistle Pipe Band and the NSW Pipe Band Association, and is currently the Acting Vice Principal of Drumming in NSW.

Over the past 50 years, many Bands have ceased to exist, often due to the retirement of older members and lack of replacement players. This highlights the importance of teaching and developing young people to take an active role in the continuity of Pipe Bands in the future.