

2026 SCOTTISH
163RD VICTORIA



HIGHLAND
HIGHLAND
GAMES
GAMES
WOMEN'S
AND CELTIC
WORLD
FESTIVAL

CHAMPIONSHIPS



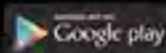
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around town | community events



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The first Victoria Highland Games is held by the Caledonia Benevolent Association ● **1864**

Amalgamation of the Caledonia Benevolent Association and St. Andrew's Society. They continue to managed the games until 1937 ● **1870**

25th Anniversary of the Games ● **1888**

Victoria Highland Games Association (VHGA) is formed ● **1938**

For more information, visit the **History Tent** or our website at **victoriahighlandgames.com**

VHGA donates proceeds to the Scottish War Effort ● **1939 to 1945**

Games continue to be held at various venues around Victoria ● **1945**

Games move to Victoria's Topaz Park to expand the event, including the Victoria International Heavy Events Challenge ● **2008**

VHGA becomes the sole organization responsible for the historic Craigflower Manor and Property ● **2014**

Victoria Highland Games Association officially opens its Victoria Scottish Community Centre ● **2022**

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ADRIANE WILSON, CHIEFTAIN OF THE GAMES



Many of you will recognize this year's Chieftain of the Games as she has competed many times in our Pro Women's class in our Heavy Events. Adriane Wilson has been competing in the Scottish Highland Games Heavy Events competitions for 17 years. She has won a total of eight world championships and holds multiple world records in the sport. She also had a distinguished career in Track and Field during college and beyond, winning multiple NCAA Division II titles and setting records in Discus and Shot Put.

One of the most impressive stories about Adriane's career is that at age 23, while at the peak of her athletic performance, she was diagnosed with Hodgkin's Lymphoma just one year before her goal of competing at the 2004 US Olympic Trials. Through sheer grit and determination, she trained through six months of chemotherapy and cancer treatments, beat the cancer, and qualified to place 5th at the trials.

Adriane is known for her positive energy and tireless dedication to giving back to the sport and the games. She is the founder of the Scottish Highland Games Women's World Championship Committee and is one of the main reasons we are able to bring the championships to Victoria this year.

Adriane graduated from Ashland University in 2004 with a degree in Physical Education and Health. She lives in West Columbia, SC, works as a trainer and coach, she loves being able to coach all abilities, ages and all sports. She is honored to have been chosen to coach adapted sports for the Warriors Games and the Invictus Games in both the shot put and discus since 2016 to the present.

Adriane is deeply honored to be chosen as our Chieftain of the Games for the 163rd Victoria Highland Games and wishes all competitors, performers, and spectators the best weekend possible!

On behalf of the Victoria Highland Games Association Board of Directors, I welcome you to our annual weekend celebration of world-class Scottish and Celtic arts, culture, music, dance and sport. I particularly wish to acknowledge the women heavy event athletes from all over the world competing for the title of 2026 world champion! The VHGA is very grateful to our sponsors, community partners and government agencies whose support is critical to maintaining the high quality of our Games. And we thank all our wonderful volunteers who keep the weekend running smoothly and are the lifeblood of the Games. The VHGA looks forward to enhancing future Victoria Highland Games and managing its Scottish Centre in View Royal to ensure Scottish and Celtic arts and culture thrive in Greater Victoria!

I wish you a great weekend of wonderful memories!

Jim Maxwell, President
Victoria Highland Games Association





Welcome to the 163rd year of this incredible festival! As the oldest cultural event in Greater Victoria, the Games are such a special part of our community's fabric. Whether you have deep Celtic roots, you're here to watch the sheer strength of the events, or you just want to take in the music and grab something good to eat, the energy here is always fantastic.

Events like this don't just happen on their own. A massive thank you goes out to the Victoria Highland Games Association and the countless volunteers who work so hard behind the scenes to bring this weekend to life. You do an extraordinary job of keeping these traditions alive for all of us to enjoy.

To everyone joining us this weekend, have a wonderful time celebrating together. I look forward to seeing you out on the field!

Will Greaves, Member of Parliament



Greetings from Mayor Marianne Alto

On behalf of the City of Victoria, I am delighted to welcome you to the 163rd Victoria Highland Games and Celtic Festival.

A standout tradition, this festival is the longest continually running Highland Games in North America. Enjoy highland dance, piping and drumming, international heavy events, and—for the first time ever in Canada—the Scottish Highland Women's World Championship.

Congratulations to the Victoria Highland Games Association, participants, organizers, and volunteers on another successful celebration of Celtic culture and friendly competition. The Games also mark the start of a busy festival season in our city—an opportunity to share old and new traditions and community spirit.

Thank you for visiting and supporting the Victoria Highland Games and Celtic Festival. Enjoy the Games!

Sincerely,

Marianne Alto, Victoria Mayor



Cathy Geagan was appointed as Ireland's first Consul General to Western Canada in August 2022.

From her base in Vancouver, Cathy and the Consulate team are working to promote Ireland and Irish culture, heritage and interests in British Columbia, Alberta, Yukon and the Northwest Territories; to provide services to Irish citizens in the region, and to further strengthen the links between Ireland and Western Canada.

Cathy wishes all participants at the Victoria Highland Games and Celtic Festival a very successful weekend!



Minister for Public Safety & Solicitor General, Nina Krieger is delighted to attend the Highland Games and Celtic Festival in her capacity as MLA for Victoria–Swan Lake. With over twenty years of leadership experience in the non-profit sector, Nina has a long-standing commitment to

advancing education, justice, and a more equitable future for all British Columbians. A strong champion for arts and culture, she is pleased to recognize this important festival and its enduring contribution to fostering a vibrant and connected community.

This ancient sport is believed to have been brought to Ireland by the Celts around 1200 BC. It is considered to be the fastest grass field sport in the World and can be described as a combination of Field Lacrosse, Field Hockey and Rugby. For the

VHGA's McNamara Cup, the game will be played as a Super Sevens format with only net goals no upright points.

HURLING **SAT SUN**



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Associations*

Blue Dragon Society
 UELAC Victoria Branch
 Vancouver Island Scottish Dance Society
 Victoria Genealogical Society
 78th Fraser Highlanders Victoria Garrison
 78th Fraser Highlanders Vancouver Garrison
 Fight Like A Highlander
 Victoria Handweavers' and Spinners' Guild
 Victoria Scottish Gaelic Choir
 BC/Yukon Branch of the Royal Heraldry Society of Canada
 Celtic Performing Arts Inc.
 Kindred of the Gaels Society
 Craighdarroch Castle Society
 Ross Bay Villa

Clans*

Clan Leslie
 Clan Hunter
 CASSOC (Clans and Scottish Societies of Canada)?
 Clan Murray
 The Stewart Society
 Highland Clan MacNeacail of North America
 Clan MacLeod
 Clan Mackenzie
 Clan Young
 Clan MacAulay Association

(* This is a list of clans and associations confirmed as of the date of this printing. Visit the Clan Tent for a complete list of clans and associations present at the games.

“What’s the Rush?” University of Victoria Mapping Table
Art by Laura A. McDonald
 Fantasy Arts
Art by Dale Hitchcox
 Beaver House Fudge
Cherry’s Stained Glass
 Bag’s N- Boxes
Wild Abandon Jewelry
 Happy Camper
 Freeze Dried
Vancouver Island Scrunchie
 WindspINNERS
Sharon Hubbard Arts
 Island Sisters
 Body Works
Karmic Henna Art & Sparkly Tattoos
 Phaest Digital Art
Bebop’s Creations

Your Yiru Baby shop & Photography
Tidal Toys
 Sparklelily Jewelry
Spell Binding Leather
 Otter & Emma
Island Jerkey
 West Coast Creative Spirits
Macaloney’s Island Distillers
 King Kauna
 Hawaiian Shirts
Fantastical Worlds
 Ima Designs
West Coast Black Sheep Custom prints
 Oh Snap Trio
North of Hadrians Kilts
 Affordable Kilts
The Scottish Shoppe
 Sasquatch Snacks
McpHail Kits

HUNGRY? READY TO SHOP?

Island Culinary Service

haggis & gravy, scotch pies & beans, bacon baps

Greek on the Street

pita wraps, souvlaki, hummus, tzatziki, calamari, spanakopita (vegan, vegetarian & gluten free available)

Mama Rosie’s Kitchen

authentic Filipino cuisine (vegetarian available)

Country Crepes

savory and sweet (vegetarian & gluten free available)

Naked Dressings

all natural salads and bowls (vegan, vegetarian & gluten free available).

Trio’s Extreme Mac and Cheese

macaroni and cheese comfort food

Morning Star Coffee

coffee shop

Kattias Kitchen Authentic Mexican

authentic Mexican, tacos, quesadillas (vegan, vegetarian & gluten free available)

Holy Cow Mini-Donuts

freshly made do-nuts

Road Treasure Treats

ice-cream, cotton candy

Lemon Heaven

freshly squeezed lemonade and cotton candy

Hazel’s Ice Cream

hand-dipped ice cream bars

Weiner Dogs

hot dogs, veggie dogs, various toppings, assorted fruit, chips, drinks

Bao Theory

modern Taiwanese street food

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WHISKY SCHOOL

SAT SUN

Signatory Vintage Independent Bottlers

(Sat 10:45am)

with Adam Bradshaw

Charcuterie and Laphroaig Distillery Masterclass

(Sat 12:20pm)

with Perry Brewer

Hunter Laing Independent Bottlers Masterclass

(Sat 1:55pm)

with Lee Hanson

Gordon & MacPhail Independent Bottlers Masterclass

(Sat 3:30pm)

with James Bornn

House of Suntory Japanese Whisky Masterclass

(Sat 5:05pm)

with Rick Sousa

Paul John Masterclass

(Sun 11:00am)

with Kirk Doherty

Dalmore and Friends Masterclass

(Sun 12:35pm)

with Adam Bradshaw

Scotch Malt Whisky Society Masterclass

(Sun 2:10pm)

with Lawrence Graham

The Vancouver Island Distilleries Masterclass

(Sunday 3:45pm)

with Chris Reid,
Adam Bradshaw, and
Duncan Polson

WINE SCHOOL

SAT SUN

Bubbles! Sparkles!

Saturday, Sunday 1:00pm

Summertime Sippers

Saturday, Sunday 2:30pm

Big, Bold Reds from Around the World

Saturday, Sunday
4:00pm

The Victoria Highland Games Association is pleased to present "The Wine Tasting School".

All sessions feature high quality wines (6 samples each class) presented by Dustin Truscio from Everything Wine.



HIGHLAND DANCE **SAT SUN**

What are judges looking for?

In competitions, dancers are judged on three fundamentals: **timing**, **technique** and **general deportment**.

Dancers are judged on their **timing** by their ability to follow and keep to the rhythm of the music.

Good positioning of the feet and hands, strong footwork and coordination of the head and arms are important **techniques** watched closely.

Dancers are judged on **general deportment** through their posture, balance, carriage of their head, body, arms, hands and general confidence and happy demeanor.

While highland dancing is an athletic skill dancers must perform with lightness and graceful ease.

Competition

In competition, each dancer is ranked according to one of five groups: **Primary**, under 7 years of age; **Beginner** until winning 6 different contests; **Novice**, until winning 6 more competitions; **Advanced Intermediate**, for one year from date of last Novice competition; and then **Open or Premiere**. Each of these groups has several age classifications.

Up until the 1900s, Highland Dancing was originally an athletic event for Scottish Men only, to keep soldiers in the Scottish Regiments in top physical shape for battle. It wasn't until the World Wars that women started dancing, to keep their heritage and culture alive while men fought in war. Today, Highland Dancing organizations and schools exist around the world and women outnumber men significantly. Dancers around the world perform both **Traditional** and **Scottish National Dances**.



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Together, Terry and Ceilidh present a wide range of songs and tunes in the style of an intimate kitchen concert. Usually exhilarating and free flowing, sometimes mellow and thoughtful, this hugely entertaining and engaging duo is not to be missed.

The McGullicuddy's

Under the influence of old school punk rock and traditional Celtic tunes, the McGillicuddys are a psycho ceilidh mixed up with power chords. Electric guitar, bass and drums provide a thumping background, for the lashings of mandolin, tin whistle and accordion that complete the glorious din.

Castle Ceilidh

Cookeilidh

Cookeilidh has been delighting audiences for years with their high energy traditional, and modernized Celtic tunes. Comprised of 12 string guitar, fiddle, Irish flute, electric bass, bodhran and vocals, they define their music as "Trad with Attitude" "Celtic Craic" and "Pot O' Gold Folk". A timeless blend of music and vocal numbers that caters to all ages and all audiences.

Victoria Scottish Gaelic Choir

Guth Nan Eilean - Voices of the Island, aka Victoria Scottish Gaelic Choir, has been promoting and preserving the Gaelic language, music and culture since 1997.

Joe Higgins

Joe Higgins is a Scottish singer/songwriter from the Glasgow area of Scotland who also thoroughly enjoys playing the old Scottish songs from his childhood. Joe immigrated to Canada over 25 years ago and has had the pleasure of playing his tunes in and around Victoria, B.C. pubs and local events ever since.

The Slieves

The Slieves are a West Coast Celtic band hailing from Victoria and Duncan B.C., the traditional territories of the Lekwungen, WSÁNEĆ and Quw'utsun peoples. Brought together by their love of traditional Irish Music, this group has brought Celtic folk and Celtic-inspired original music to the coast of B.C. for well over a decade.

Black Angus

Black Angus is an enduring musical outfit built on good friends, good humour, and good music. At its core are Gareth Hurwood and Alex MacCuaig, whose musical partnership began in 2007 and continues to evolve within and beyond the Celtic tradition

Tom Morrissey

Tom Morrissey, lives on Vancouver island. Playing pubs, clubs and festivals all over Canada bringing high energy east coast music and pub favorites to every show. Born in Mount Pearl Newfoundland Tom has been entertaining audiences for over 40 years.

Clanna Morna

Hailing from the occupied territories of the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ nations (Victoria, BC in Canada), Clanna Morna breathes life into their unique take on the Celtic Folk genre. Their sound is rooted in the traditional Irish, Scottish and English music that many love, and features carefully crafted arrangements, rhythmic spirited energy and captivating storytelling.

The Hounds of Cuchulain

The Hounds of Cuchulain are a high-energy celtic folk band from Victoria BC who perform a wide selection of Irish, Scottish, English, and original songs in the Celtic tradition, dating from the 1600's all the way up to the 1980's. The group's performances feature rowdy pub songs, historical ballads, haunting airs, and ripping reels - all woven together with engaging storytelling of the music's history.

- Heritage Tent (D5) **1**
- Piping and Drumming (A4) **2**
- Children's Area (B4) **3**
- Clans' Tents (D4) **4**
- Merchant Vendors (D4) **5**
- Food Court (A4) **6**
- Whisky School (C4) **7**
- Celtic Music Tent (B5) **8**
- Wine School (C4) **9**
- Main Stage/Highland Dance (D4) **10**
- History Tent (D5) **11**
- Capital City Pipe Band (C4) **12**
- Hospitality Tent (C4) **13**
- Volunteer Tent (C3) **14**
- Hurling (E2) **15**
- Heavy Events (E5) **16**

A

B

C

D

E

F

1

2

3

4

5

- Medical 
- Bathroom 
- Security Tent 
- Information 
- Food Stand 

B Beer Gardens

- B1** Crooked Caber (E4)
- B2** Rampant Lion (C5)

G Entrance Gate

- G1** Finlayson Gate (C2)
- G2** Glasgow Gate (A5)



CRANK IT ON THE CRAWL



SATURDAY

SUNDAY

SPORTS MUSIC / DANCE CULTURE / EDUCATION

NOTE: schedule subject to change without prior notice

	Celtic Music Tent	Heritage Hub	Heavy Events	Piping & Drumming	Whisky / Wine School	Celtic Music Tent	Heritage Hub	Heavy Events	Piping & Drumming	Whisky / Wine School			
08:00													
08:30													
09:00		9:00 Harpist, Allison Vardy	8:00 Men's and Women's Masters Competition	9:00 Solo Piping and Drumming Competition			9:00 Harpist, Allison Vardy	8:00 Men's Amateur A / B + Women's Amateur competition	9:00 Solo Piping and Drumming Competition				
09:30													
10:00	10:00 Joe Higgins	10:00 How we Saved the Harry Potter Railway (A/V)								10:00 Nuclear Energy in Scotland & Beyond (A/V)			
10:30													
11:00	11:00 Terry Boyle Music	11:00 Scottish Myths, Monsters & Legends (A/V)			10:45 Signatory Vintage Independent Bottlers	11:00 The Slieves	11:00 Scottish Myths, Monsters & Legends (A/V)			11:00 Paul John Masterclass			
11:30													
12:00													
12:30			12:00 OPENING CEREMONIES & MASSED BANDS (Glasgow Green)					12:00 OPENING CEREMONIES & MASSED BANDS (Glasgow Green)					
12:30	12:30 The Slieves									12:30 Dalmore and Friends Masterclass			
13:00		13:00 Women's Foodways in the Highlands & Islands 1770-1850 (A/V)	13:00 Braemar Stone Put	13:00 Pipe Band Competition	13:00 Bubbles! Sparkles! (wine)	12:45 Victoria Scottish Gaelic Choir	13:00 Better Never Grew! Scotch Broom (A/V)	13:00 Open Stone Put	13:00 Pipe Band Competition	13:00 Bubbles! Sparkles! (wine)			
13:30	13:30 The Hounds of Cuchulain					13:45 The Hounds of Cuchulain							
14:00		14:00 The Rich Land of Gaelic Culture (A/V)	13:45 Light Hammer Toss		14:30 Summertime Sippers (wine)		14:00 Whisky, Snuff & Witchcraft (A/V)	13:45 Heavy Hammer Toss		14:10 Scotch Malt Whisky Society Masterclass			
14:30	14:30 Clanna Morna					14:45 Black Angus							
15:00		15:00 Evolution of Scottish Dance	14:45 Heavy Weight for Distance	15:10 Regimental Drum Major Contest			15:00 Evolution of Scottish Dance (A/V)	14:45 Light Weight for Distance	15:10 Regimental Drum Major Contest	14:30 Summertime Sippers (wine)			
15:30	15:30 Castle Ceilidh		15:30 Weight for Height	15:40 Pipe Band Competition	15:30 Gordon & MacPhail Independent Bottlers Masterclass	15:45 Black Angus		15:30 W. J. Maxwell Challenge Caber Toss	15:40 Pipe Band Competition	15:45 The Vancouver Island Distilleries Masterclass			
16:00		16:00 Victoria Scottish Gaelic Choir			16:00 Big, Bold Reds (wine)		16:00 Victoria Scottish Gaelic Choir	16:00 Lighthouse Brewing Company Keg Toss	16:00 Canadian Army Pipes and Drums	16:00 Big, Bold Reds (wine)			
16:30	16:30 Tom Morrissey		16:15 Caber Toss	16:30 Closing Ceremony and Massed Bands		16:45 The McGullicuddy's			16:30 Closing Ceremony and Massed Bands				
17:00													
17:30	17:30 The McGullicuddy's			17:30 Mt. Baker High School Mountaineer Marching Band	17:05 House of Suntory Japanese Whisky Masterclass								
18:00						17:45 Tom Morrissey							
18:30													

2026 LIGHTHOUSE BREWING COMPANY VICTORIA INTERNATIONAL HEAVY EVENTS CHALLENGE

SAT
SUN

The Heavy Events have been contested at Highland Games for centuries, starting with games set up by King Malcolm III of Scotland to select the strongest men to serve as his bodyguards. Implements used were from that period of history, blacksmith's weights, hammers used for driving fence posts, stones from local rivers and trees cut down by woodsmen. There are eight traditional events that you will see contested and all are a true test of not only strength but skill and athleticism.

Victoria Highland Games Pro Field Records

Victoria Open Stone

57'5" | 48'10.5"
Kyle Lillie – 2024 | Adriane Wilson – 2013

Victoria Braemar Stone

42'5" | 40'8"
Kyle Lillie – 2015 | Amarissa Handy - 2025

Lightweight for Distance

92'2.5" | 90'10"
Matt Vincent – 2015 | Elissa Hapner – 2018

Heavyweight for Distance

48'3.25" | 55'1.5" (World Record)
Spencer Tyler – 2016 | Jessica Bridenthal – 2017

Light Hammer

142'10.5" | 111'9"
Matthew Doherty – 2018 | Kristy Scott – 2013

Heavy Hammer

117'8" | 91'3"
Matthew Doherty – 2016 | Kristy Scott – 2014

Weight for Height

18'2" | 18.1'
Andy Vincent – 2016 | Elissa Hapner – 2018

Victoria Heavy Events Committee

Ray Siochowiez: Athletic Director
Russ Campbell: Assistant Athletic Director
Carl Jensen: Sponsor Chair
Dom Horgan: Head Judge
Alex McAra: Equipment Manager
Ali Gaul: Volunteer Chair

Heavy Events T-Shirt Design @ZoeJensenDesign

Putting The Stone The precursor to the modern Olympic shot put, the Stone Put is thrown in two styles.

The **Braemar Stone** is a standing throw and a stone weighing up to **13-18lbs for women** and **20-28lbs for men**. The **Open Stone** weighing **8-12lbs for women** and **16-20lbs for men** is thrown with movement such as a glide or spin.

Weight For Distance The athlete uses a spinning technique to throw the Lightweight (**14lbs for women** and **28lbs for men**) and the Heavyweight (**28lbs for women** and **56lbs for men**). The implement is a ball and an 18" chain which are thrown with one hand for distance.

Throwing The Hammer The Hammer involves a weighted head attached to a rigid pvc handle. The Hammer is spun overhead multiple times and released over the shoulder of the athlete. The **Light Hammer** weighs **12lbs for women** and **16lbs for men** and the **Heavy Hammer** weighs **16lbs for women** and **22lbs for men**.

Weight For Height Weight for Height is one of the greatest tests of explosive power in the Heavy Events. The weight is thrown with one hand overhead for maximum height. The athlete has three attempts at each height and is scored on the last successful height cleared. The implement weighs **28lbs for women** and **56lbs for men**.

Tossing The Caber A Caber is a tapered log of varying lengths and weights. The athlete will attempt to pick up the Caber and balance it holding the small end in their hands. They will then run with the Caber and attempt to flip it end over end. The Caber is thrown for accuracy rather than distance or height. A judge standing directly behind the athlete scores each throw based on how straight the Caber lands. Scoring follows a clock-face system: a perfect throw is 12:00 (straight ahead) with acceptable throws falling between 9:00 and 3:00.

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2026 SCOTTISH HIGHLAND GAMES

EMILY ADAMS, USA

Hometown: Schneider, IN (age: 40, 5'9", 230 lbs)
Occupation: Track & Field Equipment Manufacturing
*Three World Records in Sheaf toss (10#, 12# & 16#)
*Current & 4X Victoria Pro Women's Champion

FELICIA BAKER, USA

Hometown: Vista, CA (age: 39, 5'9", 174 lbs)
Occupation: Construction Company Program Director
*2016 3rd place World Championships
*Broke 5 world records as a lightweight thrower
*Avid admirer of geese

JAMIE CLARK, CANADA

Hometown: Calgary, AB (age: 35, 5'11", 215 lbs)
Occupation: Grade 4 Teacher
*Competed at Women's World Championships 2023 & 2025
*Multiple 2nd place finishes at Canadian Championships
*2019 Canadian Champion

ALEXIS JOHNSON, CANADA

Hometown: Calgary, AB (age: 25, 5'11", 315 lbs)
Occupation: Social Worker, Province of AB
*Light Hammer Canadian Record holder
*Heavyweight for Distance Canadian Record holder

KATIE CROWLEY, USA

Hometown: West Salem WI (Age: 41, 5'8", 160 lbs)
Occupation: Physical Therapist
*Ranked #5 in North America
*Lightweight World Champion 2016s last 3yrs

MEAGAN MCKEE, USA

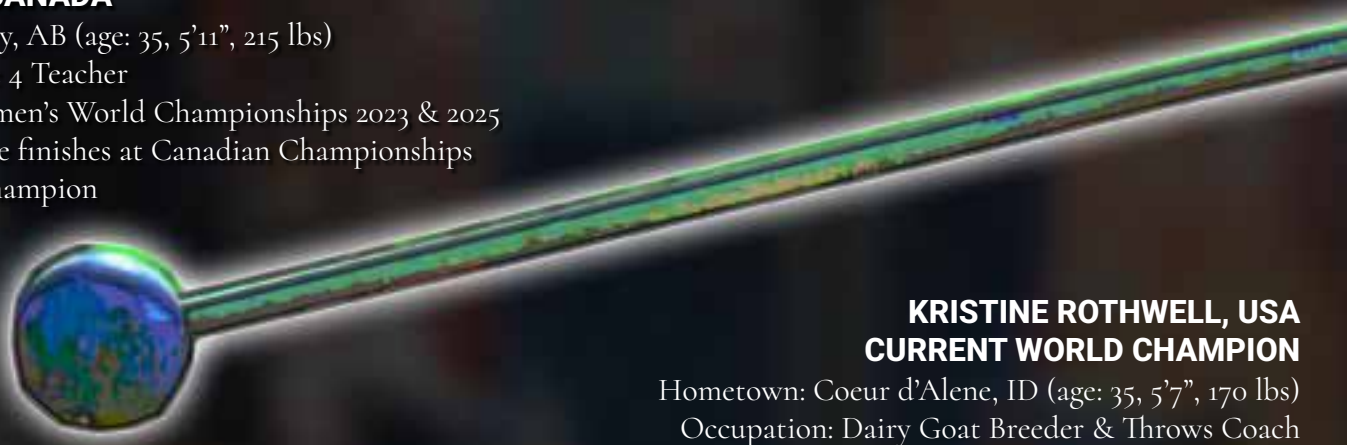
Hometown: San Jose, CA (age: 34, 5'11", 265 lbs)
Occupation: High School History Teacher
*5X Women's World Champion (2019, 2021-24)
*Light Hammer World Record Holder
*Heavy Hammer World Record Holder

JULIET RAMSAY, SCOTLAND

Hometown: Glenisla, Angus (age: 17, 5'9", 176 lbs)
Occupation: Construction Labourer & University Student
*3rd place at 2025 Women's World Championships

The Victoria International Heavy Events Challenge has been leading the change across North America helping to support the growth of the top level Women's Class from an "Elite" to "Professional" level and our Games has evolved promoting equality with the Men's Pro Class in terms of class sizes, prize money and travel expenses.

This year the Victoria Highland Games Association took the next step, submitting a bid and being awarded the opportunity to host the 2026 Scottish Highland Games Women's World Championships. This is a tremendous honour for Victoria, as it will be the first time the Women's World Championships has been held outside of the USA.



KRISTINE ROTHWELL, USA CURRENT WORLD CHAMPION

Hometown: Coeur d'Alene, ID (age: 35, 5'7", 170 lbs)
Occupation: Dairy Goat Breeder & Throws Coach
*2025 Women's World Champion

ERIN SWANSON, CANADA

Hometown: Fort St John, BC (age: 31, 5'11", 200 lbs)
Occupation: Massage therapy
* 1st pregnant athlete to compete in the VHG (2025)
* 2024 4th place at Canadian Championships
* 2022 Victoria Highland Games Amateur champ

DENIECE VEENSTRA, NETHERLANDS

Hometown: Zuid-Beijerland, South Holland
(age: 22, 5'7", 159 lbs)
Occupation: Physiotherapist & Personal Trainer
* 2 X Women's European Lightweight Champion
* 3 X Dutch Women's Champion
* Ranked 3rd in Women's Lightweight World Rankings

ADRIANE WILSON, USA

Hometown: West Columbia, SC (age: 45, 5'9", 135 lbs)
Occupation: Operations Specialist at the Army Recovery Care Program
*5X Women's World Champion
*3X Women's Masters World Champion
*Held multiple World Records

WOMEN'S WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS



PRO ATHLETES (MEN)

DAMIEN FISHER, USA

Hometown: Ferndale, WA
(age: 34, 6'7", 290 lb)

Occupation: Strength and
Conditioning Coach/T&F Coach
– Western Washington University

*5th place 2024 & 2025 World Championships

*2nd place at 2023 World Championships

*3rd place at 2022 World Championships

ALEX MCARA, CANADA

Hometown: Victoria, BC (age: 27, 6'2", 300 lb)

Occupation: Heavy Equipment Technician

*Top 10 last 3 World Championships

*3rd place 2025 Canadian Championships

*2nd place 2024 Canadian Championships

NIC RENYARD, CANADA

Hometown: Campbell River, BC (age: 31, 5'11", 280 lbs)

Occupation: VIHA/Hockey Coach

*2nd place at 2025 Canadian Championships

*7th place 2025 Scottish World Championships, Halkirk, Scotland

*former Victoria Royals Hockey coach

Michael Elcock, Author & Historian.

Saltire Society

The Fight to Save the Harry Potter Railway: How we stopped London from Closing the Line (with Audio Visual)

Years before Harry Potter, British Rail tried to close one of the most beautiful railway lines in the world.

Lois Thompson, Genealogist

Victoria Genealogical Society

Scottish Myths, Monsters & Legends (with Audio Visual)

Genealogy is more than names and dates. Genealogy is also about our ancestors' beliefs and what influenced their thinking. Lois presents a fun discussion on various myths, monsters, legends and how they influenced our ancestors.

Dr. Theresa Mackay, Historian.

University of Victoria

Our Kitchen Landscape: Women's Foodways in the Western Highlands and Islands, 1770–1850 (with Audio Visual)

Twice selected as UVic's Scottish Studies Fellow, Dr. Mackay specializes in the history of women and foodways of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Highlands and Islands, the focus of today's talk.

Sharron Gunn, Author

The Scottish Highlands:

Rich Land of Gaelic Language & Culture (with Audio Visual)

Gaelic speaker, teacher, translator, interpreter of Gaelic nuance, historical consultant, and author, Sharron will take us through the land of the Gaels.

Bob Williamson, Engineer

Saltire Society

Nuclear Energy in Scotland and Beyond (with Audio Visual)

Bob worked in the construction of Scotland's first nuclear power plant, and in civil engineering design for nuclear plants in England.

Michael Layland, Author & Historian

The Saltire Society, and The Victoria Historical Society
Better Never Grew! Scotch Broom — love it or pull it? (with Audio Visual)

Michael Layland has written four books about early Vancouver Island. While not a Scot, he is married to a proud Macdonald, and so is a member of the Saltire Society.

Marilyn Bowering, Author

The Saltire Society

Whisky, Snuff and Witchcraft:

Mary MacLeod, 17th century Gaelic Bard (with Audio Visual)

The award-winning Canadian Author sketches some of her findings about the cost of standing up to power. Màiri nighean Alasdair Ruaidh was a rarity.

Harpist, Allison Vardy

A resident of Cedar, Alison has been plucking harp strings for many years. She plays without written music, switching keys and hands effortlessly.

The Victoria Gaelic Choir

Guth nan Eilean, The Victoria Scottish Gaelic Choir is a SATB a cappella choir based in Victoria, BC. We sing traditional songs of the Scottish Highlands in Gaelic while also including some contemporary favorites in Scots.

Gordon Robinson with Accordionist Mary Ross, and the Vancouver Island Scottish Country Dance Society.

The Evolution of Scottish Dance:

At Home and Around the World.

The Saltire Society's Gordon Robinson, a popular teacher of Scottish Dance, will explain the development of this healthy and enjoyable dance form.

HISTORY TENT

Come visit the History Tent to learn more about the Games history and Scottish culture! There will be photographs, articles and write-ups on famous Scots, Scottish inventors, Piper James Richardson as well as past Victoria Highland Games from years dating back to the 1860s.

Also, don't miss out on the displays about Craigflower Manor and property, a National Historic Site of Canada. On the Craigflower property, the VHGA has recently built the Victoria Scottish Community Centre which is the home base of the Association.

The original Highland Games were founded by King Malcolm III. The first Highland Games were held in Scotland in the 11th century, known as Canmore (1058-1093).

They were originally created to find the fittest men to deliver messages for the King. In later years, these gathering were used as training exercises for clan warriors.

They included tests of strength, agility, accuracy and stamina of the candidates such as the caber toss, the sheaf toss, and the stone throw.

Featuring competitions on Piping and drumming, dancing, heavy athletics, as well as all kinds of entertainment and exhibits, the Victoria Highland Games and Celtic Festival celebrates and helps promote the Scottish and Celtic culture.

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Pipe Major Dr. Richard Parkes

MBE, MSc, served as Pipe Major of the Field Marshal Montgomery Pipe Band for 44 years, leading the band to an unprecedented thirteen World Championship titles, the most ever achieved by a single pipe major. Under his leadership, the band also secured a record 72 major championship victories and completed the historic Grand Slam of RSPBA Major Championships three times, in 1993, 2011 and 2013.



Alongside his remarkable band career, Dr. Parkes is one of Ireland's most accomplished solo pipers. He has won all the major solo

titles in Ireland, including seven AllIreland Championships, nine Ulster Championships and eight Northern Ireland Piper of the Year awards. He also enjoyed success at the highest level of competition in Scotland during the late 1980s and early 1990s, winning premier prizes at both the Northern Meeting and the London Competitions.

In recognition of his outstanding contribution to piping, Dr. Parkes was appointed MBE in 2004 and received honorary doctorates from Queen's University Belfast and Ulster University in 2019. He is a qualified RSPBA adjudicator and instructor, and a member of the Solo Piping Judges Association. Outside of piping, he is a former senior project engineer in the aerospace industry and holds a Master's degree in Polymer Engineering. He lives in Northern Ireland with his wife Ruth, whose support has been central to his career.



Drumming Judge John Fisher

John Fisher is one of the most versatile players and educators of our lifetime. His career has spanned over 3 decades dividing his passion between pipe band and drum set genres.

John is both a master player and educator. He was a former faculty member at the Musicians Institute in Los Angeles where he also performed as a studio session drummer. He has counselled and instructed many world-famous drummers including Grammy,

Billboard Magazine, American Music, MTV music award winners.

He is a former North American Champion, a former lead drummer of The City of Victoria Pipe Band, a drum corps member of the Shorts and Dykehead Caledonia Pipe Band under lead drummer Alex Duthart, and a former lead drummer of the 78th Fraser Highlanders Pipe Band.

John was the lead drummer of the Spirit of Scotland Pipe Band from its inception until 2016. In 2008, the Spirit of Scotland Pipe Band, comprised of world-class players, was

the subject of an award-winning documentary by John McDonald, "On the Day".

Residing in Vancouver, John performs, teaches and counsels private drum set and pipe band snare drum lessons. In addition, he is a much sought-after instructor and performer for many pipe band schools and workshops across North America..



Primary Elements of Judgement

EXECUTION – the technical aspects of playing an instrument with controlled sound.

MUSICAL EXPRESSION – the ability

to properly phrase tunes at tempos that contribute to its overall musicality.

TONE & TUNING – the overall sound of the instruments. Proper tuning and blending of the chanter and drones contributes to tone. Tuning should be done so that no wavering sound is detected

as the instrument is played.

ENSEMBLE – pertains to band competitions. The ensemble judge listens to the 'fit' of the drum score to the pipe music, the balance of volumes from side, tenor, and bass drums with the pipes, and the overall effect of 'one great instrument'.



Drum Major Jason Paguio

From Coronado, California, Jason Paguio is a 6-time World Champion Drum Major. Jason won his first world title in the Juvenile category (18 & under) in 2004. In 2007, he made international history by becoming the first person from outside the United Kingdom to win the World Drum Major Championships in Glasgow, Scotland.

Following that title, he has qualified as a finalist consecutively and repeated his World Championship wins in 2010, 2013, 2014, and 2019, making him the most successful

active competitor currently at the World Championships and tied for the second most World Championship titles.

Originally a classically trained trumpeter player, Jason's began his drum major career in an American-style marching band. Jason is honoured to represent Simon Fraser University Pipe Band as their drum major, performing with the band in local contests, at the World Pipe Band Championships, in many of the band's concerts, and throughout the world.

Professionally, he is the President and CEO of the Asian Business Association of San Diego.

Drum Major Dave Cubberly

Dave brings more than 40 years of experience as a competitive Drum Major, instructor, and adjudicator. Widely respected within the piping and drumming community, he is known for his strong leadership, technical precision, and longstanding commitment to Scottish musical tradition.

Dave has served as Drum Major for the Prince Charles Pipe Band (SF) for 26 years and is the senior Drum Major for the massed bands at the Caledonian Club

of San Francisco's Scottish Gathering & Games in Pleasanton, California. In these roles, he leads large ensembles and upholds high standards of presentation and coordination at major regional events.

In addition, Dave is a founding partner of the Pipes & Pubs competition circuit, where he helps lead and host multiple events throughout the season. Outside of music, he is a Principal Landscape Architect with a global design firm, bringing the same discipline, creativity, and leadership to his professional career



Mt. Baker High School Mountaineer Marching Band

The Mount Baker High School Mountaineer Marching Band, based in Deming, Washington, has been a proud Northwest tradition for 85 years. Known for their crisp marching style and spirited sound, the Mountaineers appear at parades, community celebrations, and school events across the Pacific Northwest.

Dressed in their classic Scottish uniform, the band brings a distinctive look and heritage to every performance. Today, the ensemble is led by student drum majors Madison Burlingame and Eleanor Okan, who guide the group's musical preparation and on-field presentation.

Vale United Pipe Band - Duty Band

Vale United Pipe Band is a Grade 3 competition band based in the Okanagan Valley of British Columbia. Formed in 2018 by longtime Fraser Valley pipers Doug Bird and Eric Froese, the band carries forward the legacy of the Fraser Valley's historic competitive ensembles. Members now come from across Western Canada and proudly wear the Ancient Weathered MacPherson tartan under the leadership of P/M Doug Bird and L/D Will Currams.

The band rehearses locally each week, with fullband weekend practices held monthly. Recent achievements include winning the MidAmerican Championship at the 2024 Chicago Highland Games and placing 4th at the 2025 North American Pipe Band Championships in Maxville, Ontario. In 2026, Vale United will compete at Highland Games across BC, including Victoria, ScotFest BC, Kamloops, and their hometown Penticton Scottish Festival. The band warmly welcomes interested pipers and drummers to join their growing musical community.



British Columbia Regimental Drum Major Course

The **British Columbia Regimental Drum Major Course (BCRDMC)** was established in 2018 with the goal of preserving and advancing the traditions of the Regimental-style Drum Major.

While many Drum Major styles are practiced worldwide to lead a wide variety of bands, the BCRDMC focuses exclusively on the **traditional Scottish Regimental Military style**. The course emphasizes leadership of pipe bands through drill, commands, deportment, and musicianship. Although the program is not competition-focused, students are thoroughly prepared for participation in Drum Major competitions.

The course is designed for a broad range of participants, including those new to Drum Majoring, individuals currently serving as Drum Majors

with limited formal training, and experienced Drum Majors seeking to refine or perfect their skills. Students regularly attend from across Canada and abroad, with many returning year after year.

Instruction is led by **Drum Major Bill O'Donnell, Drum Major Bryan Martin, and Drum Major Kazimierz Jan Jednorog**. The course is held annually in **Victoria, British Columbia**, during the week leading up to the **Victoria Highland Games & Celtic Festival**. The week of instruction concludes with participation in the **Victoria Highland Games Regimental Drum Major Competition**, held on Saturday and Sunday.

For more information, visit our non-profit organization at BCRDMC.com or www.facebook.com/bcrdmc.

What is a drum major?

A drum major leads a pipe band while marching and is responsible for providing commands and directions of what the band will play and when.

The commands may be given either verbally, through hand gestures or with the use of their mace. The drum major often holds the responsibility to keep the band organized and structured.

The Scottish Drum Major competition is an exciting highlight of any highland games, providing the audience with a perfect spectacle of tradition, mixed with innovative showmanship.



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Photo: Michael Douglas

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Sport brings people together and celebrates excellence. In Greater Victoria, we relish the opportunity to host and support sporting events, including the World Women's Heavies. Our welcoming atmosphere, diverse venues, and stunning natural surroundings set the foundation for memorable performances and celebrations.

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