

Gathering of the Clans and Canada Day report 2019

The 69th Pugwash Gathering of the Clans will be remembered as the wettest and coolest we have experienced in many years. Despite the miserable weather, all events went ahead except the fireworks which were set off July 28th during HarbourFest. With several weeks of cool, wet weather in June and recent construction in the park, even if July 1st had turned out hot and sunny, the park would have been nearly unusable. The Highland Dance and music events were moved to the High School.

The parade was as large as any could remember for a long time. The winners were:

Commercial

1st Cunningham Construction

2nd K+S Windsor Salt

3rd KT Leard

Non-commercial

1st 4H

2nd Friends of the Pugwash Estuary

3rd Pugwash Communities in Bloom

Antique Vehicles

1st North Shore Tractor Club

2nd The rusty truck (Stephen Conrod)

3rd Orange truck (Kevin Smith)

Most Original/Humorous:

Ava Mundle and friends (riding cow *Windypoint Girlie*)

There were 95 Highland Dancers competing on the Pugwash District High School (PDHS) stage through the morning. Many thanks to the volunteers who rolled with the challenges of a last minute venue change and helped this run smoothly. The winner of the much-prized Bonny Gael Memorial Trophy was Larissa Godin of Bathurst, NB. The judge was Fiona Connell from Bermuda. Fortunately, Fiona was visiting the area for the national competitions, so we didn't have to pay her travel.

There were four pipe and drum bands this year. A fifth band that was registered to compete withdrew due to the weather. Grade 4 winner: Dartmouth and District Pipe Band. Grade 5 winner was Cape Breton University Pipe Band, playing in their very first competition. There were 22 pipers and 6 drummers who registered for a total of 73 solo competition events.

23 vendors registered for the day with about 20% of them either cancelling or leaving early because of the weather. The midway was here again, and the heavyweight games were held again at the Cyrus Eaton Elementary school playgrounds. The soggy grounds meant a lot of additional work to repair through the summer.

The Opening Ceremony was held on the new Pugwash Harbourfront Centre observed by a small, brave group of supporters in the park. The Official Opening of the Centre was also held at this time.

The entertainment at the PDHS through the afternoon and evening were the Christina Martin and Dale Murray band, Alycia Putnam and family, Doris Mason and James Logan, and finally Rawlins Cross. The fireworks were postponed due to the weather.

The gates were run by groups of volunteers. With all entertainment events moved to the high school, we closed the gates down at about 4pm. Advance sales, the six gates and high school door took in \$8,013 selling 1,616 wristbands. This was about one third of our usual numbers.

Thank you to the 120 or more volunteers that helped the day go smoothly and coped with a very different festival this year. All the various events, parade security, the gates and bankers are all run by volunteers and all deserve big thanks!

Thanks also go to the many sponsors whose generosity help make this historic event a success. Given the much reduced gate this year, extra thanks go to the support from sponsors who make a tremendous difference in keeping this festival going.

Having an assistant help with event organization and registration, particularly Highland Dance, was an enormous help. Advance sales at the Visitor Information Centre improved this year and we see that as a useful means of selling wristbands in the future.

Preparations and meetings for next year's event are already under way. John MacArthur of That Ilk, Chief of Clan Arthur will be visiting the Maritimes next year and is hoping to attend as many Scottish games as possible during his stay.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Betts, Coordinator