



Northern California Camanachd

Press Clippings Album



Here we collect press clippings from our first 10 years. We hope they will provide an insight into our beginnings, activities and future goals.

For further information please contact us via email at info@norcalshinty.com or via post at P.O. Box 8284, Berkeley CA 94707-8284. And be sure to explore our website at www.norcalshinty.com for more information, photos and a schedule of upcoming events.



The NCC is 10 and looking ahead... and back in a Scottish newspaper

From the Sunday Post (Glasgow) – 25 April 2010

The SUNDAY POST

April 25, 2010

No. 5454 — 1

Price £1 Irl €1.30, Can \$5.50, Toronto \$4.95

Loose Page 26

20 THE SUNDAY POST/ April 25, 2010

Californians dreaming of shinty going big time

A BUNCH of friends get in some shinty practice on the beach.

The only thing is, this isn't a stretch of sand in the Highlands.

The giant Pacific breakers probably give the game away — it's California!

They're members of a burgeoning shinty club in America's Sunshine State — all thanks to Michael Bentley (48) from San Francisco.

When he was a teenager he joined a group researching Scottish culture and history.

While flicking through a book about the Highlands he came across a description of shinty and was instantly hooked.

"Some of us were looking for physical activities so we thought we'd give it a shot," says Michael. "We didn't even realise it was still being played!"

"I was delighted when I

By James Millar

discovered it's a living game and when I visited Scotland in 1983 I took in some games and returned with sticks and rule books."

Michael and his friends played games against each other but numbers dwindled as they grew up, some moved away and jobs and families took precedence.

Spark

But the spark didn't die and in 2001 Michael and two of the original players decided to try again.

"The three of us figured if we didn't do it then the only game we'd be playing would be wheelchair shinty!"

"We pursued it a bit more seriously but the big



■ Skye Camanachd travelled to San Francisco to play against the Northern California Camanachd Club.

difference was that this time round we had the Internet. That's allowed us to reach more people and it's taken off."

Starting with demonstrations at local Highland games in California the Northern California Camanachd Club attracted more and more players, many with Scottish ancestry some just looking to try something new.

"There's a huge variety

of people in California. On any given weekend you can see Indians and Pakistanis playing cricket, Canadians playing lacrosse and all sorts of nationalities playing soccer or baseball.

"People are willing to try other sports here. Several of our members have come along just out of interest but once we get a stick in their hands most enjoy it and come back."

Now the club runs a



■ Shinty on the beach — but in the Sunshine State of California.

regular league and the players skills have improved.

They've even gained enough confidence to challenge native players.

In 2005 the NCCC toured Scotland playing games at Blairgowrie Highland Games and in Musselburgh.

"I don't remember the scores but I know we didn't win," laughs Michael. "We didn't compare too badly, though the opposition may have been going easy on us."

In 2007 the team returned for ties in Skye. They lost again but there were signs of progress.

"We didn't grow up

with the game, we're still mastering basic stick skills but you could see we were playing the same game this time. And we've a few skilled young players that the guys from Skye Camanachd said would get a game with a league team with a bit more training."

Return

And of course the Skye players were keen to play a return fixture.

"It's not hard convincing people to come to play in California!" beams Michael. "Last year Skye Camanachd brought 16 people to the San Francisco area for two weeks to play some fixtures culminating in an

appearance at the Pleasanton Highland Games, the biggest games west of the Mississippi with a crowd of around 40,000."

Now Michael's keen to spread the shinty gospel.

He explained, "It's always going to be a speciality sport here. I think I know all the people playing it in the US. The nearest club to us is in Portland, Oregon — about 700 miles away. Scottish teams don't have to travel quite that far for a fixture!"

"We'd like to recruit more teams to our league, get knowledge of shinty out there and perhaps one day hold an American championships."

EXTRA SPECIAL OFFER
THIS WEEKEND ONLY
- 2 FREE DELUXE

The science contained in Shenergy is the same method used by elite athletes to



Our first appearance at the Pleasanton Highland Games... the big event!

From the Contra Costa Times – 31 August 2008



Games travel 2,000 years back — shinty style

PLEASANTON: Ancient sport's club whacks its way into 143rd Scottish gathering

By Robert Jordan
STAFF WRITER
PLEASANTON — Experiencing shinty, the oldest Gaelic team sport, through history books wasn't enough. Michael Bentley and a few friends decided they had to actually play the game.

On Saturday, seven years

after Bentley started the first shinty club in Northern California, the sport premiered at the 143rd annual Scottish Highland Gathering and Games at the Alameda County Fairgrounds in Pleasanton.

Shinty, known as *camanachd* in Gaelic, dates back more than 2,000 years and is played primarily among villagers in the highlands of Scotland. Players use 2- to 3-foot-long sticks called Camans and whack a ball that's no bigger than a baseball.

The game is played on a

170-by-80-yard field with 12 members to a side. Each member wears shin guards and takes golf-like swings at the ball while running or standing still, trying to get the ball into a 12-by-10-foot goal at each end of the field.

"Most people think we're crazy," said Ben Phillips, a 47-year-old San Mateo resident about the first reaction spectators have when they see the sport. "They think we're insane to play this game, but when they stop to watch and notice what we do, they see we aren't crazy

and that we don't sit around."

At an event in which odd sporting competitions were not unusual, the game — which looks like field hockey but is played with elements of golf, soccer and lacrosse mixed in — seemed to fit right in.

"We tried to get it started in the early '80s but we didn't have enough people," said Bentley, a 46-year-old graphic designer from Berkeley, about the Northern California Camanachd Club, of which he is

See GAMES, Page 28

Games

FROM PAGE 25

president. "We tried again in 2001 and said if we don't do it now we'll be playing wheelchair shinty."

With suitable fields hard to find in the U.S., Bentley and crew use soccer fields and have pared down the game to either six or seven players on each side.

Support is growing, Bentley said.

His club may be the only one in California, but it's grown from eight members to more than 40.

The club has three teams, representing the South Bay, East/North Bay and San Mateo.

And you don't have to be Scots to play. The club has men and women players of Scots, Asian, German and Italian descent.

Mark Brandt, 48, of Laguna Beach, and Frank Boyne, 51, of Mission Viejo, didn't think Saturday's shinty players were crazy. Both called the sport interesting.

Boyne grew up in Scotland and had seen shinty on television.

But the closest he ever got to the game was playing field hockey. Brandt had never seen the game before Saturday.

Boyne "told me it was sort of like field hockey," said Brandt, who has made the annual trip up from Southern California to Pleasanton since 1998.

"We expected to see traditional Irish and Scottish traditions, so this (shinty) is a good addition."

The club tries to follow the traditions of the sport, and also boasts a true Scottish connection.

For four out of the last five

years, the club has played in the Blairgowrie Games in Scotland that have often coincided with the Scottish Games in Pleasanton.

This year, because of rising costs, and with the games being played next weekend, the NorCal club accepted an invitation to play at the games in Pleasanton.

The homeland connection also helps with the club obtaining equipment which is not available for sale in the United States.

"It's a unique sport," said Julius Talyansky, 20, a Sunnyvale resident and one of the club's youngest members.

"Because it's not commercialized, it is played for sport and not money."

Contact Robert Jordan at 925-847-2184 or at rjordan@bayareanewsgroup.com.



From the 2007 club trip to the Highlands, our third club trip to the Scotland and first to Skye.

From The West Highland Free Press – 14 September 2007

West Highland Free Press

AN TIR, AN CANAN, 'SNA DAOGINE

Portree **613456**

a-taxi 01478 61 23 23

A 2 B contracts

No 1846

West Highland Free Press, Friday 14 September 2007

65p

PROFILE 5



the finish from close range. After half-an-hour the hosts were forced into a change and injured wing back Zander Grant was replaced by

working overtime to keep a series of attacks at bay. However, the equaliser duly arrived after 75 minutes when Colin Fraser bundled

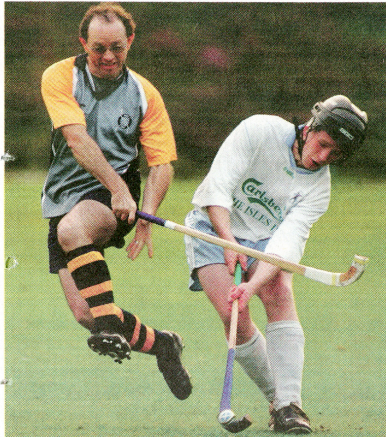
corner of the net. Another sweeping move ended with MacFadyen pulling off a fine save from Danny Morrison, and Donald

his second to put Skye 2-0 up. The goal spurred Kilmallie into life and Sean Wannock at left wing forward fired narrowly past Nicolson's right-

defending kept Kilmallie from adding to their total. On the hour mark, when Kilmallie number nine Liam MacDonald eluded Skye's Jamie

this was a merited result from a young Skye team whose best performers were Shockey MacLennan and Jamie MacDonald.

Top salmon man's shock



Andrew Banks clears during Skye's transatlantic challenge match with Northern California Camanachd (FP946F)



Skye Camanachd president Ross Cowie presents a plaque to Michael Bentley from Northern California Camanachd (FP846G)

Feast of shinty for Skye's transatlantic visitors

A small piece of shinty history was made in Portree last week as Skye Camanachd hosted their first-ever transatlantic visitors from the Northern California Shinty Club.

Over the course of last Thursday and Friday the American club took on a Skye XII, sampled some local primary shinty action and got a taste of a competitive local game in the shape of the annual Ewen Morrison Cup match between the north and south of the island.

The 20-strong group are part of a contingent of up to 50 shinty players currently participating in the game on the US west coast, with the trip to Skye taking the team's founders full circle after first making contact with the island club 24 years ago.

Having first come across shinty in a Scottish heritage book, the club's founders Elberan Francis and Michael Bentley assumed the sport had died out when they began making their own sticks and balls in an attempt to "revive" it some three decades ago. However, when they learned the game was still very much alive a letter, simply addressed to Skye Camanachd, Scotland, was

dispatched in earnest and soon the club, and its two members, had their first set of rules and contact with the game's Scottish fraternity.

A visit to Scotland in 1983 gave Michael Bentley his first introduction to the sport, and also incidentally to Skye stalwart John "Bodach" MacKenzie, whom he met at that year's Mod, and from there further roots of the club were sown. With some in the present club being drawn from the Highland Games circuit, or a shared passion for Scottish music and dance, the club has no ex-pat members and one player, a fleet-footed half forward named Julius, even hails from Russia.

Following the successful visit, and subsequent reception courtesy of Highland Council, plans are already afoot to send a Skye delegation over to visit California in the future, possibly as early as 2008, for some exhibition matches at one of the state's Highland Games.

Meanwhile, the South End team retained the Ewen Morrison Trophy last Friday night, with Danny Morrison's hat-trick giving them a 3-0 win over the North.



Kenny Campbell wins after a challenge from Gillesbuig Macdonald during Friday's Ewen Morrison Cup match (FP846H)



We made the front page! FYI, Piedmont High School's mascot is the Highlander.

From The Piedmonter – 11 March 2005

THE Piedmonter

Piedmont's community newspaper since 1916

☆ Friday, March 11, 2005

Piedmonter.com • 50 cents (tax included)

Sports Courtney Paris leads Highlanders over Durhan in CIF hoop playoffs [C1]

Arts Sketches give intimate look at grand master Rubens [C12]

School team



NORTHERN CALIFORNIA CAMANACHD CLUB

A BAY AREA club that plays Scotland's oldest team sport — a stick and ball game called shinty — was formed in 2001 and includes a player who works in Piedmont.

Ancient sport scores with local enthusiasts

By Lisa Coffey Mahoney
STAFF WRITER

Scotland's oldest team sport is beginning to make its presence known in the Bay Area.

A stick and ball game, shinty (called camanachd in Scottish Gaelic) is a cross between field hockey and the Irish sport of hurling, said local player Michael Bentley.

"It's a unique combination of running, hand-eye coordination, field strategy and team dynamics," he said.

Bentley, a 43-year-old Berkeley resident, helped start the Northern California Camanachd Club in 2001.

The roots to the club go much deeper, he said.

"Our first attempts to get the game going here date back to the early 1980s and arose out of the activities of a small group of Northern Californians with a mutual interest in Scottish culture and history," Bentley said.

The group came across an intriguing description of the game in the book "Highland Folkways," by I.F. Grant.

"We thought (playing shinty) would be fun to do as part of our activities," he said.

Bentley traveled to Scotland in 1983, and went to some shinty matches. He even had an oppor-

tunity to practice with the Skye Camanachd Club, headquartered in the city of Prosser on the Isle of Skye.

"The people (in Scotland) were really helpful in giving me rulebooks and yearbooks with photos," he said.

Upon Bentley's return, his group made a serious effort to start a club that would play shinty by the modern rules and with modern equipment, but things didn't work out at that time.

"This was a time in our lives when we were graduating from the university, getting married, getting real jobs and, in general,

making big changes in our lives," he said. "As a result, the group was, for a time, cast to the four winds."

On New Year's Day 2001, three members of the group — Bentley, Elheran Francis and Karl Davis — met for dinner and began to talk about shinty and how they should start to play again while they were still capable.

The group began having regular practices and played demonstration matches at local Highland Games, including those held at Oakland's Dunsmuir House.

This year's event at Dunsmuir

See SHINTY, Page A11

Shinty

FROM PAGE A1

is scheduled for July 9-10, and Bentley hopes people will come out and watch the shinty matches.

The group is also organizing a four-team tournament to be played at the Livermore Highland Games, which will be held at Robertson Park in Livermore on May 14-15.

Francis, a 50-year-old Fremont resident who teaches a highland dance course at the Piedmont Adult School, said shinty is an addictive game.

"When somebody comes out for the first time we can usually tell within 20 minutes if they're going to be hooked or not," he said. "A light goes on in their eyes."

Francis said that the emphasis of the sport is on skill rather than body contact "or muscling your way through things."

For that reason, he believes, shinty encourages sportsmanship and promotes bonding.

"In many other team sports, sportsmanship is sometimes lacking," he said.

Bentley said that what intrigues him most about shinty is that it's a living tradition.

"It gives a bigger context than a coat of arms on the mantelpiece, or pictures in a scrapbook. It's something that you can be involved in. It's a living thing that people can pass on for generations to come," he said.

Currently, the group, which numbers about four dozen men,

women and teens, practices two to three times a month on fields in Santa Clara, Fremont and San Mateo.

"We're the first, as far as we know, shinty club in the United States," Bentley said. "Last year, a second club started in San Luis Obispo (The San Luis Obispo Shinty Club). We sort of helped them get started."

Last August, the two teams battled it out in the first trophy cup match between two U.S. shinty teams at the Monterey Highland Games held in Salinas, Bentley said.

NCCC won the match, 2-1, which was sponsored by Glenfarclas Single Malt Scotch Whiskey.

Both Bentley and Francis like the fact that the shinty group is like a big family that also engages in social activities away from the field.

"We go out together afterwards," Bentley said.

Bentley's goal is to increase interest in shinty so that separate Bay Area teams and maybe even a small league will be possible.

"I would love it if 20 years from now there are youth and adult shinty teams," he said. "I hope we can accomplish that, but it's difficult trying to create an infrastructure from scratch."

Write to Lisa Coffey Mahoney at lmahoney@cctimes.com.



A special feature on the Livermore Scottish Games, where we played a number of times.

From The Valley Times – 28 April 2005



Discover LIVERMORE

Fine Wine Country Since 1849



COURTESY MARC GOLDMAN

OPENING CEREMONIES at last year's Livermore Scottish Games in Robertson Park included honored guests and local Scots, each wearing their clan's plaid. The ceremonies also include a long parade of the participants, plus bands, flags and athletes.



COURTESY MARC GOLDMAN

DANCERS SHOW OFF their precise steps during demonstrations and contests at last year's Livermore Scottish Games.

Let the games begin: Livermore Scottish Games are May 13-15

Enjoy spinning, tossing, sheepdogs from local ranches will return this year for non-competitive demonstrations to four years old and potty-trained, they're old Dairdy will play traditional Celtic music. Pipes! What would Scottish games be without the pipes? [Click here to see the photos from the Livermore Scottish Games.](#)

APRIL 28, 2005

An advertising supplement to the Valley Times

Game of shinty is not just for Scots anymore

BY CAMERON SULLIVAN
CORRESPONDENT

Although the ancient sport of shinty is played in major tournaments across Scotland, in the U.S. the sport is just getting its footing. Most of the star shinty players in Scotland are in their 20s; here the jocks are in their 40s. Shinty demands a lot of coordination, a good degree of strength and speed, a little bit of fancy footwork, and — for the victors — a drop or two of single malt scotch in the winner's cup.

Members of the Northern California Camanagh Club — one of only two known U.S. shinty clubs (the other is in San Luis Obispo) — will compete against one another in a series of contests at the Livermore games. Played on a field resembling a soccer field, the matches will follow the official rules of shinty, a stick-and-ball type game similar to field hockey with high-sticking allowed.

"We do play coed," said John Morrison of Livermore, who has played the game for

nearly five years. "And we're always looking for new players."

Morrison was one of the first team members recruited by Michael Bentley, who founded the club in 2000. The team now practices every other week and competes in matches at Scottish games across Northern California. The club played the San Luis Obispo team last summer in the first known U.S.-based Shinty Cup and earned recognition in a daily newspaper in Scotland for the event.

It may seem arbitrary that a couple of 40-something American guys are so involved in a Scottish sport that is at best only vaguely popular in the U.S. But put in perspective with their other talents, their attraction to shinty makes sense.

"Michael plays the bodhran [a Scottish drum of sorts] and sings in Gaelic," Morrison said. "And we both were in the hobby of Scottish Country Dance. So, me being a hard-core jock, when they said they needed players I said, 'Game? Sport? What is it?'"

Morrison failed to elaborate about whether he still participates in country dancing. But for Bentley's part, Scottish music is still part of his life. He and his wife, who plays the fiddle, perform regularly at dances and have recorded several CDs.

Bentley said that the shinty matches at the Livermore games will take place on both days, with two or three games per day. They will divide the club members into separate teams and form what he called an "inter-club sort of tournament."

For information on the Northern California Camanagh Club, visit www.foundrysite.com/shinty or call Michael Bentley at 510-549-1645.



And here we made the front page again!

From the San Mateo Daily Journal – 8 September 2005



**FLIGHT 93
MEMORIAL**
NATION PAGE 7



BUNGLE FEARS
With Katrina, governor's worry about
tragedy response
THE BACK PAGE



**BIG TRUCK
RECALL**
BUSINESS PAGE 10

THE DAILY JOURNAL

Leading local news coverage in San Mateo County

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2005 • VOL. VI, EDITION 19

WWW.SMDAILYJOURNAL.COM

County scores well on state tests

By Heather Murtagh
DAILY JOURNAL STAFF

While not all San Mateo County school districts are meeting state testing goals, every district either increased or maintained their API score this year.

The Academic Performance Index is a numeric scale ranging from 200

to 1,000 that reflects a school's performance level based on statewide testing results. While a 700 score is considered basic and an 875 score is considered proficient, California has a performance target goal score of 800 for all schools. When calculating a school's API, certain factors are taken into consideration: The California Standard Test, a norm-

referenced test such as the California Achievement Test and the California High School Exit Exam. The API scores were released by the California Department of Education last week and school officials are just now beginning to make sense of the numbers.

The largest increases both came from the Sequoia Union High

School District. Redwood High School, a continuation school, raised its score 106 points from 409 to 515.

The largest jump in the county, however, the school now scores barely above a below basic score. Sequoia High School had the second highest increase going from 599 to 674, a 75-point increase bringing

the high school closer to a basic score.

North Star Academy, an elementary school in the Redwood City, scored the best out of any school in the county with 973 — close to perfect.

Hillsborough City Elementary

See TESTS, Page 22

Red Cross
workers
can't do it all



DANA YATES / DAILY JOURNAL

Nik Sarkpot and Walt Worthge practice their shinty during scrimmage game at Fiesta Meadows park in San Mateo. Goalkeeper Eheran Francis waits for action.

Shinty players swing into gear

By Dana Yates
DAILY JOURNAL STAFF

It's not quite field hockey or Irish hurling, but shinty is a 2,000-year-old Scottish sport picking up popularity in the least likely of places — San Mateo.

This month a team of Bay Area men — mostly from San Mateo — were the first known American shinty team invited to play the game in the Scottish highlands. Only seven are making the journey, but there are plenty more in the Bay Area picking up

curved sticks and joining the shinty revolution.

The men are between the ages of 25 and 55.

See SHINTY, Page 12

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- The Northern California Camanachd Club at www.foundrysite.com/shinty
- US Camanachd at <http://www.uscamanachd.org/>

Veto

CAL

THE DAILY JOURNAL

SHINTY

Continued from page 1

many of them fathers from Fiesta Gardens Elementary School. They've been playing pick-up games for the last two years and, by a Celtic coincidence, met organizers of the Scottish games earlier this year who extended the invitation to play in their tournament next month.

"It's truly a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," said Michael Bentley, an East Bay resident and founder of the Northern California Camanachd Club.

Camanachd is the Gaelic name for shinty and term used when referring to official rules and regulations. The game itself is reserved for areas of Scotland with Gaelic population.

"Not everyone in Scotland knows about shinty," Bentley said with a chuckle during a team scrimmage at Fiesta Garden Meadows in San Mateo.

In Scotland last weekend, the team managed to score one goal against in three short games. It's crowning achievement was when Eheran Francis won the Player-of-the-Match award, selected by the Camanachd Association.

Under its current rules, shinty is played 12 to a side with two periods of 45 minutes. The Northern California team plays with seven to a side. The field is 140 to 170 yards long by 70 to 80 yards wide. The goals are 12 feet wide by 10 feet high. The playing stick — the caman — is usually made of laminated hickory or ash, and the triangular head is about half two-thirds the length of the head of a hockey stick.

The ball has a seamed leather cover with a circumference between 7.5 and 8 inches and weigh between 2.5 to 3 ounces.

The game dates back 2,000 years and claims to be Scotland's oldest team sport, although it does not have professional league yet. Like many other sports, the game didn't gain written rules until the 19th century.

In 1879, the Glasgow Celtic Society instituted a cup competition and established rules

of play. About the same time, the celebrated Captain Chisholm of Glassburn drew up "The Constitution, Rules and Regulations of the Strathglass Shinty Club" published in 1880, according to the Camanachd Association.

It is also considered to be the predecessor to ice hockey.

More than 100 years later, the game is gaining momentum again. The local interest began when Bentley was researching his heritage 20 years ago. He tried to start a team then, but college and careers got in the way, he said.

Two years ago, while manning a shinty booth at the Dunsmuir games in Oakland, Bentley was approached by San Mateo resident Bruce Norris. He liked what he saw in the dangerous game that allows players to take a baseball swing with something similar to a hockey stick. There's no high-stick rule in this game.

"I thought there were plenty of crazies in San Mateo that would play," Norris said.

So he gathered some of his friends — men, women and children — and the group began practicing. What started as barely enough people to hold a game has expanded to include enough people for three teams.

The group has won the California shinty championships two years in row. Their only competitor is a team from San Luis Obispo. However, they are hoping next year's tournament will grow with rumors of teams starting up in Hollywood, Seattle, Wash. and Houston, Texas.

In May, Bentley met a well-known Scottish family who were guests of honor at the Pleasanton Highland games. They were so impressed with the idea of an American shinty team that they invited the men to Scotland for an annual tournament held the first weekend of September.

In Scotland, the sport is broken into men, women and youth leagues. Only the men were invited to play in the tournament.

That doesn't mean women won't be watching — 13 friends are making the journey to watch the team play, said Norris.

Team members include Bentley, of Berkeley; Eheran Francis, of Fremont; Bruce Norris; Ben Phillips; Mark Lawson; Walt Worthge and Jonathan Yee of San Mateo.



Our first newspaper appearance, strangely enough it's from the heart of shinty country in Scotland!

From the Strathspey & Badenoch Herald – 24 January 2002

Page 14 – Thursday, January 24, 2002

The Strathspey and Badenoch Herald

Results

Ballicore Cup, second round: Bute x Lochcarron x; Lochaber 4, Glasgow Mid Argyll 5; Strathglass 0, Kyles Athletic 2. Aberdeen Considine Sutherland Cup, first round: Caberfeidh 3, Lovat 5. Second round: Kilmory x, Glenorchy x. MacAulay Cup, second round: Oban Celtic x, Glenorchy x. Tulloch MacTavish Cup, second round: Kilmallie x, Skye x. Strathdearn Cup, first round replay: Fort William x, Strathglass x. Second round: Inverness x, Glenurquhart x. Marine Harvest League, Premier Division: Inveraray x, Oban Camanachd x; Kingussie 2, Newtonmore 0. National League, Division 1: Glenurquhart x, Ballachulish x. North, Division 1: Inverness x, Caberfeidh x. Division 2: Kinlochshiel x, Kingussie x, Newtonmore x, Kilmallie x. Division 3: Beauly x, Aberdeen University x; Lochcarron x, Boleislane x. South, Division 1: Kyles x, Oban Celtic x, Tayforth 0, Kilmory 1. Division 2: Ballachulish x, Edinburgh East Lothian x; Glasgow University x, Edinburgh University x.

Camans swinging in California – all year

IN the San Francisco Bay area of Northern California they have solved the debate over whether shinty should be played in the winter or summer – they simply play all year round, writes John Robertson. Although there has been a club there since the early 1980s, the past year has seen major progress and the establishment of a thriving outfit which intends to send four six-a-side teams around the Highland Games circuit next summer. Their story is particularly unusual. Nearly 20 years ago one of their players read a description of the ancient sport of Camanachd in Dr I. F. Grant's book Highland Folk Ways. For a number of years a group of players then played exhibition matches with hand-carved camans in as close a re-enactment of Dr Grant's description as they could construct. In 1983, a visit to



Some of the San Francisco shinty enthusiasts.

Scotland by player Michael Bentley resulted in him returning to the American west coast with a few Munro Camans, some modern leather shinty balls, and an up-to-date rule book. Two teams were quickly set up, known as the North Tacks and the South Tacks (as a reminder of the old clan system), and training began in earnest in Fremont, which is 30 miles south of UC Berkeley, and in Santa Clara. During 2001, the club has gone from strength to strength and now describe themselves as being "beyond the wishful thinking stage." Two small incentives have recently added inspiration to their considerable

efforts. Firstly, Alasdair Cameron from Aberdeen sent them a video of a recent Camanachd Cup Final and secondly, Jane Patrick from Campbeltown has been guiding their training sessions since she moved to the San Francisco area. Some of the players travel up to two hours to attend training and the entire squad live across a huge area on the west coast. As with any successful club, they have a healthy social camaraderie and enjoy Scottish dancing and Highland music. The club have made it clear that any Scottish team wishing to make a visit to California would be most welcome.

'More for turn out

NEWTONMORE arrived at the Deil on Saturday with high hopes after their recent morale-boosting win against their old foes but went home deflated. They were expecting great things after their defeat of Kingussie in the MacTavish Cup a few weeks ago, but knew that a win this time would be a tougher proposition. Although the first half was goalless, it was hugely entertaining. The match was being evenly contested and was certainly not a walk in the park for Kingussie as Newtonmore's new-found confidence kept them comfortably on level terms. Both sides created chances but failed to strike home, with perhaps the best opportunity of the half falling to Newtonmore's Sean Latimer. He found himself clear in front of goal for a brief instant in the 15th minute, but scuffed his shot on the greasy surface, giving keeper Ian Anderson an easy stop.

SHIN The st Newton successful However a familia Ali Br opener couple o blow – a Ross for unsight Newton to piece dominat Kevin third five his man chances. However Michael, who rea with his BELOW (front, r during 5

Baxter boys very best of British

THE Baxter brothers scooped the top two places as expected at the British Land National Ski Championships in Saalbach-Austria at the end of last week.

at the top level, finishing runner-up for the second successive year. Alan said: "I held back a bit on the steep on the first run, but really this is one of those days when I've proba-

SKI-ING

Trayner, who was nearly two seconds out on Alain's first run time, but rallied on the second heat to finish 2.2 seconds behind the title

Slalom silverware, the Evie Pinching Salver, as she won the women's title for the seventh time. In terms of British Slalom titles alone, both Baxter and Carrick-Anderson are now by far

triumphed in the race for the British title, in a white-hot international field she could only make seventh place. The contest was topped by Claudia Riegler, the Kiwi skier who has



CAMANS SWINGING IN CALIFORNIA - ALL YEAR

In the San Francisco Bay area of Northern California they have solved the debate over whether shinty should be played in the winter or summer - they simply play all year round, writes John Robertson.

Although there has been a club there since the early 1980s, the past year has seen major progress and the establishment of a thriving outfit which intends to send four six-a-side teams around the Highland Games circuit next summer.

Their story is particularly unusual. Nearly 20 years ago one of their players read a description of the ancient sport of Camanachd in Dr. I. F. Grant's book Highland Folk Ways.

For a number of years a group of players then played exhibition matches with hand-carved camans in as close a re-enactment of Dr. Grant's description as they could construct.

In 1983, a visit to Scotland by player Michael Bentley resulted in him returning to the American West Coast with a few Munro Camans, some modern leather shinty balls, and an up-to-date rule book.

Two teams were quickly set up, known as the North Tacks and the South Tacks (as a reminder of the old clan system), and training began in earnest in Fremont, which is 30 miles south of UC Berkeley, and in Santa Clara.

During 2001, the club has gone from strength to strength and now describe themselves as being "beyond the wishful thinking stage."

Two small incentives have recently added inspiration to their considerable efforts.

Firstly, Alasdair Cameron from Aberdeen sent them a video of a recent Camanachd Cup Final, and secondly, Jane Patrick from Campbeltown has been guiding their training sessions since she moved to the San Francisco area.

Some of the players travel up to two hours to attend training and the entire squad live across a huge area on the west coast.

As with any successful club, they have a healthy social camaraderie and enjoy Scottish dancing and Highland music.

The club have made it clear that any Scottish team wishing to make a visit to California would be most welcome.