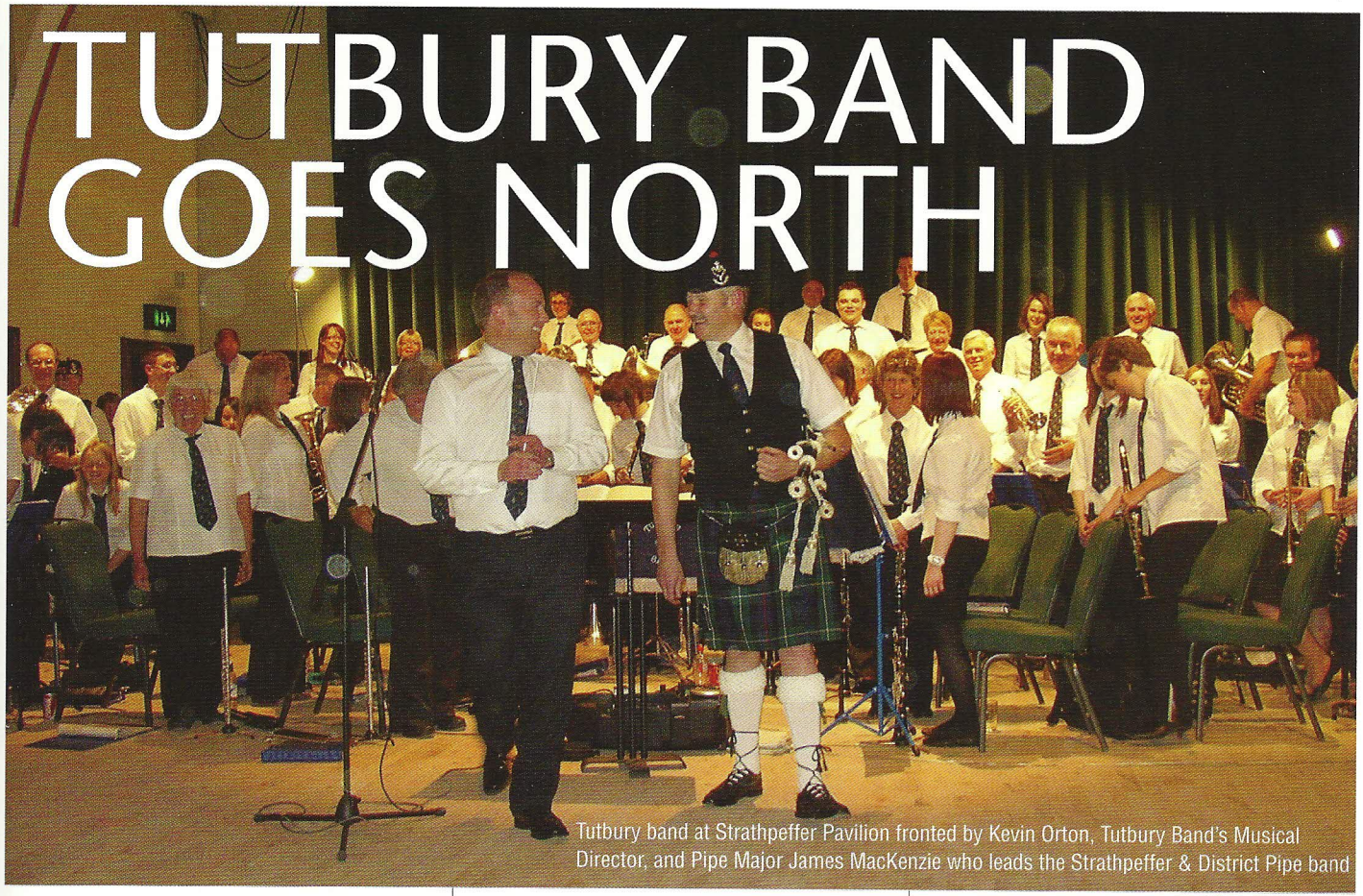
TUTBURY BAND GOES NORTH



Tutbury band at Strathpeffer Pavilion fronted by Kevin Orton, Tutbury Band's Musical Director, and Pipe Major James MacKenzie who leads the Strathpeffer & District Pipe band

When the audience gives you a standing ovation at the end of a performance you know you've done well. When the manager of the concert hall you've played in puts her arms round you and gives you a kiss you know you've done very well, but when the coach drivers who carried you on tour leap about shouting "Wicked innit", you know you've cracked it! What more can I say? The two concerts by Tutbury Band at Strathpeffer Pavilion were a success.

Strathpeffer is a delightful Victorian spa town north of Inverness set amid the forests and streams, moors and mountains of the Highlands of Scotland. This was our second visit and although it is a long coach journey, it is very worthwhile. It was made even more so by the National Hotel in Dingwall, where we stayed, at being wonderfully flexible about feeding us excellent food so that we could get to the Pavilion in good time, having free beer (until 10) and putting on a Halloween party for us. Well, maybe they would have done that anyway but it felt as if it was for us.

We did all the proper tourist things as well; a trip to the site of the Battle of Culloden (an excellent information centre and cafe), off to Ullapool for fish and chips. It tastes different when the fish was swimming about just a little while before you eat it. Some took the train to the Kyle of Lochalsh to see the Isle of Skye, others 'did' Inverness. We were blessed with some lovely sunny weather and the autumnal colours were splendid.

But the climax of the whole expedition was the Saturday night when we ended playing *Highland Cathedral* with the impeccable Strathpeffer and District Pipe Band led by Pipe Major James Mackenzie. Their tone and the precision of their playing were amazing. The sound of a pipe band and a concert band together is truly awe inspiring and the audience was duly thrilled; some were even moved to tears of delight.

A great trip. Even the deluge of rain on the way home could not dampen our spirits.

David Walford