



Terry Tully (1956 -)

Terry Tully's name is synonymous with traditional Irish music in the world of bagpipes. His accomplishments both as a solo player and as Pipe Major of the [St. Laurence O'Toole Pipe Band](#) have boosted the already high credibility of Irish Highland piping.

Born on June 2nd, 1956, Terry followed in the footsteps of his paternal grandfather, father and mother who were all pipers. A bricklayer by trade, Terry is married to Eileen, also a piping fanatic, and they have one son Alen, pipe sergeant of St. Laurence O'Toole and All Ireland Senior Solo Piping Champion in 2005

Terry first became interested in the pipes around 1964 from listening to his father Tommy. In 1966, at the age of 10, Terry joined the St. Joseph's Pipe Band from Clondalkin. Between 1967 and 1973 he was part of the revival on Highland piping in the Republic of Ireland, where a new generation of pipers was beginning to make its mark.

In 1971, Terry played at his first all-Ireland Solo Championship in the juvenile grade at Howth, taking third place to winner Ian Jess and runner up to Vivian McCann. At the end of 1973, he joined St. Laurence O'Toole, who were then competing in Grade 3 under the leadership of his father. In 1974 the band won the All Ireland Grade 3 championship and the next year it was promoted to Grade 2, where it struggled for some years.

In 1980, Terry was appointed Pipe Sergeant and became the man in charge of the band's sound. On a visit to Brittany with the band in 1983, he met Field Marshall Montgomery Pipe Band's young Richard Parkes, who would have an important influence on his piping career. The two future solo champions established an immediate rapport, and Richard encouraged Terry to delve back into solo piping, which he did, finishing 3rd in the junior section of the All Ireland in 1983.

The following year was a difficult one as his father Tommy died just as the band was beginning to make important strides. Two weeks later Terry led the band to victory in a local contest. He has never looked back.

He took the band back to Brittany in 1984, re-established contact with Richard, and later that year won Best Junior Piper at the invitational Piper of the Year event in Mid-Antrim. Solo success at the All Ireland Senior level followed quickly as Terry gained 3rd in 1986 and '87, and 2nd in 1988 and '89. He won the All Ireland Solo Championship in 1990, 1994 and 1996.

Perhaps Terry's most lasting musical achievement to date has been his adaptations of and remarkable ability to play traditional Irish tunes on the Highland bagpipe. He published three collections of bagpipe

music between 1987 and 1997, and such compositions as “Tommy Tully’s Air” and “The Pumpkin’s Fancy,” have quickly earned places among the best Highland Pipe tunes written. His skills have earned him renown and such honors as performing with The Chieftains in Carnegie Hall in New York. He has appeared on three of the group’s albums.

In October, 2013 Dublin’s St Laurence O’Toole Pipe Band officially announced the retirement of Pipe Major Terry Tully as Pipe Major after 30 seasons in that position, and the appointment of his son Alen as the band’s pipe major. These decisions were formalized at the band’s Annual General Meeting, however the news has been public since the World Championships in August. Terry will continue to be involved in and play in the band.

Commenting on his career, retirement and appointment of his son Alen as pipe major, Pipe Major Terry Tully said *“This is a proud day for me. I retire at a time when the band is playing as well as it has ever been, having accomplished what I set out to when I took leadership of the band (and then some!). I am very lucky to be able to oversee the appointment of my own son as worthy pipe major of the band, just like I succeeded my father Tommy. Succession planning is a big concern facing all successful organizations, in no matter what field. The band has been planning for this day for a number of years now, with Alen and Philip having increasing influence over musical matters, and I am confident that the transition will be seamless. Alen has all of the qualities to take the band on to further success at the top of grade 1.”*

Alen (30) began his piping career at the age of 7 years old and at the age of 21, was the youngest player ever in Ireland and only the second ever to win the Junior, Intermediate and Senior all Ireland solo Championship titles back to back.