



Old Scotch Pipes & Drums

Monthly Newsletter

No.4, 2009



Upcoming Events *(more details below):*

- ❖ Next regular monthly practice session: 10:00am, Sunday 21 June, 2009
- ❖ Solo piping competition (Univ of Ballarat): 9:30am Sunday 14 June, 2009

Success! - OSCA Annual Dinner

Those who attended the annual OSCA dinner this year (29 May) will have witnessed an historic event, with OSCA fielding its very own pipe band to welcome guests and pipe in the haggis! A mini band of ten members (including drummer) in full uniform made an impressive sight (& sound), and drew much applause and numerous congratulations. Amid some debate as to whether the 2nd haggis piper was playing approved 'seconds' or just lost the tune for a bit, the night proved extremely enjoyable and secured recognition of the band as truly 'up and running'. A few more enquiries from prospective 'old boy' members also surfaced (*so send back the forms, gents!*). See several photographs of the night on the back page of this edition.

Updating your pipes

As some pipers are still relying on old sheep/kangaroo skin bags and wet valves, suggestions are to collectively order new (zippered) Goretex™ bags, dry-boxes, drone valves, and other modernities - and to schedule a "maintenance day" to update pipes and thus improve our sound quality, playing skills and tuning. Fitting these items to your pipes should mean you can readily pick up your pipes anytime, and find them still in tune and easy to play - even if you've not used them for some time!

The key items we are focusing on are:

- Goretex™ bag (Ross) ~\$ 320
- Dry-box and plenum ~\$ 30
- Drone valves ~\$ 25/set
- Blow-pipe valve ~\$ 20
- Carbon Drone reeds \$ 80~100/set

While we probably won't see much of a discount on the collective purchase (Scots!), the opportunity to draw on the

knowledge and experience of others in rebuilding your pipes is a valuable opportunity – and you'll no doubt learn a lot from our more experienced members on the day. So, if you want to join in the collective order, and update your pipes to 'easy playing' status, then let us know by 13 June. The maintenance day is likely to be scheduled later in June or early July (email confirmation to follow based on the level of response). Contact: stewart.j.wallace@team.telstra.com or tothewallaces@bigpond.com or phone: 0409 022 334

Great 'Bagpipe Player' software

Some of you may be interested in downloading a free (yes!) software package specifically designed for playing bagpipe music on a PC/laptop – you can print scores, compose, play, tinker, and learn more about the theory of music generally. Several of us are already regular users of this package, and we already have an extensive selection of tune files. To download the package, see: <http://www3.telus.net/public/dougwick/> We also suggest you respond to Doug's request for a 'donation' to assist with further development, once you find how good this package really is.

All our band tunes (and more!) will be available for sharing in the **.bww** file format, so you can play along at home to improve your timing and expression.

**NB. We haven't yet found equivalent drum software, but if anyone knows of a good package, then do let us know. In the meantime, drummers may like to play along with 'Bagpipe Player' for general practice anyway.*

☺ *If thy neighbour offend thee, give each of his children bagpipes. -- old Scottish proverb.*

Winter Solo Piping Competitions

Several members went to the first of the winter solos held at Scotch on 17 May. Congratulations especially to Stewart Malcolm for achieving a 2nd-placing in the D-grade competition (6/8 march and 2/4 march, each of 4 parts). Well done, Stewie! This month the solos will be held on 14 June (registration from 9:00am) at the Mt Helen Campus (University Drive) of the University of Ballarat. Again, several OS P&D members will be having a go at it. This month you'll need to play:

- Novice: 2-part 2/4 march & 2-part 6/8 march
 - D-grade: 4-part 2/4 march & 4-part jig
 - C-grade: 4-part strathspey + reel, 4-part jig
- ...and anyone above that should already know what they ought to be playing!

These events involve lots of goodwill, while also improving playing skills, so don't be shy of joining us and having a go. See: www.vicpipers.org for more details – and call any of us to hitch a ride if you'd like to either watch/listen or play – we'd certainly welcome your company, and it's an interesting day's outing.

Interstate/Overseas work or holiday?

If you're going interstate or overseas for a period of time, don't forget to check the Internet for a local pipe band at your destination and pack your pipes/sticks. I recently found an active pipe band in Geneva that welcomes visiting players to their weekly evening practice sessions. Not only does it extend our contacts generally, but it is also a great social experience and introduces new tunes and playing styles. I discovered Breton piping (*sounds kinda Irish to me!*). The Scot has seeped into every corner of the world, so you'll probably be surprised at where you can find a band including Aussies, Kiwis, Canucks, Americans, Bretons, various local players and (of course) a few Scots.

Monthly Practice Sessions

For your diary, the remaining dates for OS P&D practice sessions in 2009 are:

- 21 June, 19 July, 9 August, 20 September, 11 October, 8 November, and 6 December.

Monthly practice sessions commence from 10am, at Pipe House in Morrison St, Hawthorn (*just next to the tennis courts*). So, don't miss out - come along and join in, even if you haven't played for a while – **all welcome**. Social & occasional members are also most welcome to drop in for a chat, meet the band, share a few yarns and give us some moral support.

New Band Tunes

Our regular players are now getting reasonably confident playing the two new 4-part 6/8 marches: **John Barclay** and **Angus McKinnon**. We will soon be starting on the strathspey and reel in preparation for next season's band competitions commencing in October - so you could start looking at **Maggie Cameron** and **Lt Col D.J.S.Murray** (see the OSP&D CD set). In the meantime, we'll be revisiting the standard band repertoire and polishing up the new 6/8 marches.

Rare Beers

Some of you enjoyed an unusual flavour in the 'rare beer' last month, and we are hoping to regularly add to that experience. The featured brew was a dark Scotch ale (very malty): Grand Ridge 'Moonshine' - hailing from a boutique outfit in Mirboo North, Gippsland (they also make a 'Supershine!'). We are anticipating another volunteer for the 'rare beers' roster for this month – send me an email ASAP if you have a nearby Dan Murphy, and can spring us for a dozen of 'something a bit different'. tothewallaces@bigpond.com

Reminder: annual subs are overdue

A reminder to stragglers that annual subscriptions are now overdue – it's only \$60pa, or \$30 concessional rate for students and others in exceptional circumstances. So, come to the next practice session and join up again. Don't forget that your subscription also comes with a copy of the band's 2-CD set featuring our standard settings of sheet music and good quality recordings of each tune.

☺ *A pessimistic scot is a man who feels bad when times are good for fear things could get worse when times are better.*

☺ *A Scot is emigrating to Australia. Upon entry he is interviewed by the immigration officer. The officer asks: "Do you have a criminal record?" To which the Scot replies: "Well, no . . . I did'na knoo you still needed one to get in!"*

Seeking a Drum Major

We still don't have a designated Drum Major, and without that 'someone special' in the driver's seat there is a bit of 'wander' in the front end – not to mention the rather shufti steering & braking performance. So, if anyone out there was once a DM, or otherwise feels ready to give it a go, do come forward & let us know soonest.

☺ *As a young fellow was walking through a forest, a fairy suddenly appears and offers him a free wish. He removes a pocket atlas and points towards different countries: "Here is suffering, there, hunger, and over there people are tortured. I want all people to be free and healthy. Can you do that?" The fairy sighs and says: "Well, this is very difficult, even for me. Is there a chance that you can come up with another wish instead that would make it a little easier?" The guy answers: "As a matter of fact, there is. You see, I play the bagpipes, and have such a difficult time with the doublings and grips, and especially the cruns. Do you think you could...".*
"OK - let's look at that atlas one more time".

2009 Committee Members:

President: Brian Symington - Tel: (03) 9818 8414

Vice-Pres: Stewart Wallace - Tel: 0409 022 334

Treasurer: Graham Reid - Tel: 0409 350 059

Secretary: open to nominations

Committee: seeking 2~3 nominations

Piping Tutors: Jono Quay – Tel: 0430 291 604

Brian Symington – Tel: (03) 9818 8414

Drum Tutor: TBC

Still More Drummers Wanted

The search for additional drummers is continuing – we've found several more, but nothing looks and sounds as good as a *big* drum corps. And that goes for bass and tenor drummers who've still got some 'flourish' left. You guys *know* the pipers get completely lost without you to guide them along! So if you are/were a drummer – or know any ex-band members who could be persuaded to give it another go (no matter how rusty!) – we'd be very pleased to see you and them at our next Sunday practice.

Spread the Word.....

Know any other ex-band-members who may be wondering how they can keep up their playing skills in a relaxed atmosphere? If you do, let us know their email address and we'll ensure they receive a regular copy of our newsletter.

Vacancies on Committee

We are also still seeking several more committee members to help with getting the band fully up and going, and to assist with other things – like the web site build. So, if you've got a few thoughts on things we should do (or do better), please bring your ideas to our notice. We are particularly hoping our younger members will take up a committee role to help the band stay relevant and up-to-date.

2009 Band Leaders:

Pipe Major: TBA

Drum Major: TBA

Lead Drummer: TBA

New members:

Contact: Stewart Wallace - Tel: 0409 022 334

OS P&D Performing at the recent OSCA Dinner 2009



Our President valiantly trying to keep us all on the same part (of the same tune)!!