



Old Scotch Pipes & Drums

Monthly Newsletter

No.3, 2010



Upcoming Events *(more details below):*

- ❖ Next regular monthly practice session: 10:00am, Sunday 11th July
- ❖ **NEW!** Next mid-week practice session: Wednesday 28th July
- ❖ 3rd solo piping event for 2010 – PLC Burwood: 9:30am, Sunday 25th July

REMINDER: 2010 subscriptions are now overdue - \$60 pa (\$30 concession)
Send cheque ("Old Scotch Pipes & Drums Inc") to:
OSP&D Treasurer, 82 The Esplanade, Clifton Hill, VIC 3068
...else, we'll be comin' roond to y' hoos...!!

Annual OSCA Dinner 2010

Some say it was "the best ever" dinner! Our 2nd feature performance at the Annual OSCA Dinner was 9th May – and a great night it was, too. The band had a good turnout: of seven pipers, two side-drums, and our indefatigable bass (*Johnny-Mac!*). The speeches this year were particularly entertaining – much humour throughout – and none dwelling too much on serious issues better left to the daylight hours. Even the keynote speaker, the ex-PM, Hon. Mr John Howard, brought a fair bit of laughter in his pocket. Turns out Mr Howard is an avid amateur historian with a rather special interest in a famous old Collegian: Sir John Monash – and, amongst several funny anecdotes, we all learned a little more about an eminent Australian. See photos of the band on the last page.

NEW! Mid-week practice sessions

In response to a number of suggestions, we have decided to introduce a monthly mid-week practice session – 7:30~9:00pm on a Wednesday (at Pipe House) – these are in addition to our Sunday sessions. So those who find 'early rising' on a Sunday arduous (and those with other commitments) won't have any excuse for not joining us. The dates are:

- **28 July, 18 Aug, 22 Sept, 20 Oct, 17 Nov, 1 Dec**

So mark these in your diary – we're expecting to see lots more of you getting active, now!

☺ **Grandpas don't know everything!**

Young Angus was 9 years old, and was staying with his grandpa for a few days. He'd been playing outside with the other kids from the street for while, when he came into the house and asked his grandpa "Grandpa, what's that called when two people sleep in the same room and one is on top of the other?"

Grandpa was somewhat taken aback by this question, but decided that it was time to tell Angus the truth. "It's called sexual intercourse, lad." Young Angus thought for a moment, and said "Oh, OK!" and went back outside to play with the other kids.

About fifteen minutes later, Angus came back into the house and, interrupting his grandpa rather angrily, said "Grandpa, it isn't called sexual intercourse. It's called bunk beds, and Jimmy's mum wants to talk to you right away!"

Band Tunes

We're now accumulating our band repertoire on the OSP&D web site –see: www.oldscotchpipeband.net. You will see we are including: PDF versions of the music scores; BWW versions of the tune files; and MP3 versions of the audio files. And the drum scores are beginning to appear as MP3 files, and will also no doubt soon be available in PDF format for printing.

Need some Ghillie Brogues?

Several members have expressed interest in purchasing some Ghillie Brogues to not only complete their own personal Scottish attire, but also match other OSP&D members in wearing brogues with our uniform. It's likely we can benefit from discounted pricing offered by a couple of local suppliers, so we are considering arranging a "bulk purchase" – all we need to do is determine quantity and check specific shoe-size requirements. Luckily, Scotch (courtesy of Mark Saul, Scotch's Pipe Tutor & Band Master) has a sample range of sizes on hand for confirming sizes. So, if you wish to take advantage of discounted pricing on good quality (all leather) Ghillie Brogues, make sure you get along to one of the next two practice sessions (Wed 30th June or Sunday 11th July) to get your name/requirements on our list. And, *comfort* is obviously an important feature – especially if you'll be marching with the band in your brogues. [Keith Heale is the co-ordinator of this initiative – tel: (03) 9509 6829].

NB: *To ensure a longer-wearing & more water-proof shoe, it's a good idea to immediately have your leather-soled brogues fitted with a rubberised heel-and-sole (eg. 'Topy' soles).*

A final note: If your family budget doesn't yet quite run to purchasing Brogues – don't worry! Clean black lace-up shoes are still a fully acceptable uniform item.

New Band Logo

Yes, we've been talking about it for months and it may have been the first thing you spotted on opening this newsletter! Introducing [...ceremonial blast on vuvuzela!...] a *miniature* version of the full band logo:



With thanks to our two logo designers, Scott Diener (*our lead tipper!*) and Graham Reid - *both architects by day* - who tinkered away through numerous options (*and some pretty shonky suggestions from the sidelines!!*). We know you'll all embrace the new logo with enthusiasm. With this finally settled, we're can flag our presence on bass drum ... source uniform pipe bag covers emblazoned with our logo, T-shirts (under-shirts for our No.1 uniform), Glengarry/sporran badges, and commence using our own unique letter-head – along with a new banner logo for our newsletters!

☺ *Can anyone guess what a "bubbly-jock" might be referring to?.....answer next month (when our erstwhile correspondent Reekin' Lum will no doubt provide us a full, but probably dubious, explanation!).*

OS P&D Drum Major?

Eh, Jimmy! – we have also just attracted a Drum Major with all the right moves and contemporary drill knowledge – and none too mean of spirit, to boot!! What's particularly useful is that he can not only play pipes and side drum, but is also a bit of a highland dancer!! He even provided a brief demonstration at our last Wednesday practice, so as to get our strathspey tempo right. So, a hearty welcome to Benjamin – we look forward to you helping get us further into shape as a band.

☺ *An armed, hooded, robber burst into the Bank of Scotland in Princes Street, Edinburgh, and forced the tellers to load a sack full of cash. On his way out the door with the loot, one brave Scottish customer grabbed the hood and pulled it off revealing the robber's face. The robber shot the Scotsman without hesitation! He then looked around the bank to see if anyone else had seen him. One of the tellers looked straight at him and the robber walked over and calmly shot him also. Everyone by now was very scared and looking down at the floor. "Did anyone else see my face?" asked the robber. There were a few moments of silence, then one elderly Scottish lady, looking down, tentatively raised her hand and said: "I think my husband might have caught a glimpse"*

Winter Solo Piping

OSP&D now boasts a modest but regular group having a crack at the winter solo piping competitions – including four over-50's pipers! If they can do it – find the 'fun' in it - then anyone can! At the recent University of Ballarat event we didn't quite get into the top 3 places, but playing skills are certainly improving and enthusiasm continues to run high.

The next event is conveniently scheduled for Presbyterian Ladies College in Burwood. (*entry is off Parer St, Burwood*) on Sunday 25th July, from 10am. A few supporters would be welcome to spur us along. Tune requirements for July are:

Novice:

- Strathspey & reel each of 2 parts
- 3/4 march of 2 parts

D-Grade:

- Strathspey of 4 parts
- Jig of 4 parts

C-Grade:

- 2/4 march of 4 parts
- Two 6/8 marches each of 4 parts

Subsequent solo piping events are scheduled for:

- 22 Aug – WADPADI Terang
- 26 Sept – MCPB Mt Waverley

More details of these solo events can be found at:

Victorian Pipers Association:

<http://www.vicpipers.org/>

Reminder: 2010 Band Playout Dates

For those without ready Internet access, the following are our practice play-outs for your forward planning diary (*all from 10am ~ 12noon on the relevant date*):

Sunday 11th July

Sunday 8th August

Sunday 12th September

Sunday 10th October

Sunday 7th November

Sunday 12th December – EOY BBQ

These dates may possibly change from time to time, if clashes arise with other events. But we'll keep you informed of any changes via email, our web site (*go check it out!*), and the newsletter.

① **And, to keep track of other key dates & activities, go see:** www.oldscotchpipeband.net

Next Pipe Band Competition: Daylesford – 4th December, 2010

Following our several very successful public performances at the last two OSCA dinners, and ANZAC marches at Croydon and Sorrento, several members have asked if we might have a crack at the last band competition of 2010. Nothing too obsessive, but it would provide something of a 'goal' in assembling a few 'signature' tunes. We have about 6 months to practice up – and, as usual, we would make an enjoyable picnic out of it, including partners/spouses. So, if you think we might be up to such endeavours, or are just keen to have a go at it, then let us know of your support...soonest.

Technical – tuning drones

The drones provide a harmonic background to the notes of the chanter – a bit like forming a chord on piano or guitar. Recall that, unlike most other instruments, the pipe chanter tunes on a 'linear' (*'myxolydian'*), rather than a 'tempered', scale – so all chanter notes should harmonise pleasingly with the drones. Key features of the drone sound are:

- *Volume* – how loud it is;
- *Tone & harmonics* – how pleasing it is to the ear (noting that each reed produces a complex combination of frequencies – not just a pure tone)
- *Pitch* – the frequency of the largest or characteristic component
- *Balance* – how it sounds in conjunction with the other drones and the chanter.

The drone slides include resonant chambers that further enhance the tone and harmonics produced by a reed – while the size of the bore affects the pitch. Tuning of the drone is, of course mainly achieved by adjusting its length by moving the slides up or down (with a twisting motion). However, if the drone reed is misbehaving or not seated or adjusted properly, then drone tuning may be difficult. Firstly check that the reed is firmly seated then check that the bridge is good and tight around the reed body.

The pitch can be set by adjusting the bridle to make the reed tongue longer (lowering pitch) or shorter (raising pitch) – or by seating the reed deeper (raising pitch) or shallower (lowering pitch) in the drone base. But, if you're observant, you will also notice that all these actions also subtly affect the sound volume – so some experimentation will provide useful experience. In synthetic reeds, you can also shift the end plug further into the reed (raising pitch) or further out (lowering pitch). The key concept here is the overall resonant length of the vibrating air column: longer = lower pitch; while shorter = higher pitch (*and I can hear our drummers sniggering over all this, already!*). One important aspect is that, ideally, when you increase bag pressure, the tenor drones should cut out about the same time – if one cuts out early, you should slightly lengthen the reed tongue, to improve overall balance.

There is a great deal more to learn in the art of drone tuning – much in the literature – so take some time, try out different settings, ask around, and gather experience. You'll soon find confidence in keeping your drones sounding good.

- ☺ *Sandy went to the hospital complaining of sharp pains in his legs. After a few days of tests, his doctor came to see him in the ward. "Sandy, I have some good news and some bad news. Which do you want to hear first?" Sandy asked for the bad news first. "The bad news is that we'll have to amputate both your legs." "My legs!" wailed Sandy. "What on earth could the good news possibly be?" "Well, Donald, the fellow in the ward across the hall says he's willing to offer you a good price on your kilt."*

Drummers corner

Drummers in particular should note our Wednesday evening practice sessions are particularly focussed on 'rehabilitating' those who've had a bit of an 'extended holiday' from your drumming. We know there's a few of you out there with that concern. Don't worry – it's all about enjoying the experience of gradually getting back into it. And if you want to talk it over with our lead tipper, Scott – just call him: 0400 823 835.

New Drums for OS P&D

...apparently, our drums are now not far away. We're advised that the replacement drums, which create the 2nd-hand acquisition opportunity for OSP&D, are now "on the water" and expected to arrive in a couple of weeks' time...so, we should have ours a week or so after that (mid-July?). In the meantime, with the finalisation of our logo, we are enquiring as to how/when to emblazon our bass 'heads'.

- ☺ *Eff it was nae for yer wellies, where wud you be?
You'd be in the hospital or infirmary
'Cause you wud have a dose of the flu or even
pleurisy
Eff ye did nae have yer feet in yer wellies!*

*Oh, wellies, they be wonderful; wellies they be
swell
Cos they keep oot the water and they keep in the
smell
An' when yer sittin' in a room, you can always tell
When some bugger takes aff his wellies.*

Respects to Billy Connolly

Piper & Drummer Engagements

We continue to remind you all that we are now beginning to receive periodic requests for pipers to perform at various events – particularly those in some way associated with Scotch Old Boys. We are aiming to spread these around, so if you are interested to make yourself available – noting that some, but not all, are 'paid' performances – then let us know and we'll add your name to our pool (*don't forget to ensure we have all your contact details*). This also includes opportunities for our drummers – for mini-bands, piper-drummer pairings, or occasional solo drum salutes (or funeral performances).

- ☺ *The Highlander lay dying in his bed. In death's agony, he suddenly smelled the aroma of his favourite scones wafting up the stairs. He gathered his remaining strength, and lifted himself from the bed. Leaning against the wall, he slowly made his way out of the bedroom, and with even greater effort forced himself down the stairs, gripping the railing with both hands. With laboured breath, he leaned against the door-frame, gazing into the kitchen. Were it not for death's agony, he would have thought himself already in heaven: there, spread out upon newspapers on the*

kitchen table were literally hundreds of his favourite scones. Was it heaven? Or was it one final act of heroic love from his devoted wife, seeing to it that he left this world a happy man? Mustering one great final effort, he threw himself toward the table, landing on his knees in a rumpled posture. His salivating lips parted; the wondrous taste of the scone was already in his mouth, seemingly bringing him back to life. The aged and withered hand, shaking, made its way to a scone at the edge of the table, when it was suddenly smacked with a spoon by his wife. "Stay out of those!" she snapped. "They're for the funeral."

New Tunes – update

Just a reminder to everyone that we've started work on our strathspey-and-reel set. A couple of relatively easy and (hopefully) familiar 2-part tunes: **Orange and Blue**, and **The Kilt is my Delight**. And a new but familiar 2-part 6/8 in **Cock O th' North**. You can find the PDF scores (and .bww files) available on our web site:

www.oldscothpipeband.net – look under *Repertoire* and then *Standard Band Tunes*.

2010 Committee Members:

President: Brian Symington - Tel: (03) 9818 8414
Vice-Pres: Stewart Wallace - Tel: 0409 022 334
Treasurer: Graham Reid
Secretary: Colin Bates
Committee: Keith Heale, Peter Falconer

Piping Tutor: Jono Quay – Tel: 0430 291 604
Drum Tutor: Scott Diener – Tel: 0400 823 835

A final note: *The Sunday and Wednesday practice sessions are not mutually exclusive – you can come to both! ...in fact we'd welcome – even encourage - you to both sessions. Apart from July, we've tried to separate them evenly in time – so we start to get a fortnightly practice routine going.*

Bagpipe Player Software

In case anyone has forgotten where to download the FREE **Bagpipe Player** software that plays the .bww files on our web site:

Download the Bagpipe Player software:
<http://www3.telus.net/public/dougwick/>

And, for our highly valued drummers:

Drumming Scores:
<http://www.drumscoresearch.org/?select=listbook&book=ADB1>

2010 Band Leaders:

Pipe Major: Brian Symington
Drum Major: TBC
Lead Drummer: Scott Diener

New members:

Contact: Stewart Wallace - Tel: 0409 022 334

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