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-----Est. 1980 Piping Perfection-----

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[Newsletter December 2020](#)

Dear Piping Enthusiast,

So here it is yet again - a Merry and maybe not so Merry Xmas for some people this year as things stand and not as jolly as one might wish. But hey ho, I am of the glass half full variety as I have previously said so let's crack on! With Santa on the horizon, maybe you need a little Xmas pressy inspiration so check out our online goodies like deluxe drone reeds, electronic pipes, a new chanter, cords and so on. Maybe a gift voucher would be better to let the aficionado chose for him or herself - please just email me to arrange, stating the amount and it will be valid for 1 yr. Or how about a set of small pipes - our friend Duncan Brown will tell you a bit about them below. My thanks to Duncan for his really interesting report and what a great way to round off our newsletter year.

So fill your sleigh boots and let's look forward to a brighter 2021.

Yours aye,

James C. Begg

Piping Perfection

p.s. who knows what is going to happen with Brexit , but if any of our EU friends want to get an order in and delivered by 31/12 to avoid any possible duties, please let me know a.s.a.p. Thanks

www.beggbagpipes.com

Duncan Brown

Duncan is an artist, a piper, an all round musician, a storyteller, an historian, a writer and a character of note - and no doubt he has many other attributes as well! He recently purchased a set of small pipes from Begg Bagpipes and from that encounter, we have learned a lot more about him from our direct communications and from Facebook. We asked him if he would like to report on his experience with the small pipes and this is the report he kindly sent in:



* * *

Small Pipes.

Aye James,

Many thanks again for supplying me with the set of Scottish Small Pipes recently. Tuning the baritone was interesting for me. Obviously with the Great Highland Pipes, we're tuning on the low A, but the baritone on the Small Pipes are tuned to the E. It took me a while, along with my piper pals to realise this, but once we got it, it was instantaneous. You could hear it falling into place. I know some Small Pipe players just close off the baritone when they play, but there's no need to when you realise the tuning is just a wee bit different. Very interesting. A nice different mellow sound to them too. I had to add a wee extension to the mouth piece, as I felt it was too short for my reach, but

it's fine. No difficulty with the blowing, and my buddies are forever asking to play them too. That's another good sign about them. They are a fun instrument for me. I'll never be a first class player, but I know that, and I'm more than happy to be able to play them at house parties and such. I also play a melodeon squeeze box, and the bodhrán so the addition of your Small Pipes gets me more invites to such things. I'm well pleased with them."

* * *

So there we have some feedback on the benefits of the small pipes from a piper who is normally more often seen and heard on the Great Highland Bagpipe. Photo shown right is James Begg on the small pipes - [click through](#) to the website to see more.



Duncan continued on to another great passion of his - art.

* * *

"I think I mentioned to you that PM Robert Mathieson came to me for art tuition for a couple of years, and when he was at such a level of competence, we put on the art show at the Piping Centre in Glasgow a few years ago which went very well. The exhibition included portraits of all the greats in the piping and drumming world over the last 100 years. It was a great experience for me to be on a stage looking down at an audience full of familiar famous faces from that world who had come to see our paintings of them. For me it was 'a moment in time' that I will keep in my memory forever. The personages of men like PM's Ian McLennan, Willie MacCallum, Bob Shepherd, Roddy MacLeod, Sandy Bell, Ken Eller, and a whole host of great pipers and drummers all sat with the invited guests to watch me demonstrating how to paint a familiar Skye landscape, while Robert played. It was indeed a 'one off'. It was all filmed and can still be viewed on YouTube. If you go on to google and type into YouTube, 'THE ART OF PIPERS, BY ROBERT MATHIESON AND DUNCAN BROWN' you'll get it all there. I remember Bob Shepherd coming up to me to talk about some of the 'greats' in my paintings, and just for a second, I was in their world. Jim Semple described it perfectly to me...He said the 'piping world' was like a 'special family'. As I said, just for a wee while, I was part of that family. A great honour and experience. Many of these pipers and drummers bought their portraits, which was a great compliment to us.

I know I'll never get anywhere near their level of piping, but I also know that they'll never get anywhere near my level of portraiture. So in a sense, I guess we're even, and I love the association."

* * *

So there is a flavour of Duncan's art and below we show you some brilliant examples of his wonderful gift. He goes on with another passion - the History of Scotland and the role of Scottish soldiers.

* * *

"A few years ago I wrote a book about Scotland's Victoria Cross holders. 'MY HERO, MY SOLDIER LADDIE', was debated in parliament and supplied to every school and library in Central Scotland, and this led to another few great memories for me in this thing we call life. Three of these heroes were pipers from the 1st and 2nd WW. The portrait I did of these guys is now on display in Aberdeen at piping judge Jim Campbell's School of Music there. Doubtless you know the names of the three VC pipers, James Richardson, George Findlater and Daniel Laidlaw.

Take care my friend.

Yours aye,

Duncan Brown"

* * *

We include a few thumbprint examples of Duncan's Piping masterpieces below but please do click through on the link or Duncan's thumbprint to the right to see more of his work in slide video format on YouTube, with James playing The Bonnie Woods of Strikoke and Flett from Flotta.



[Duncan Brown and his Art, with accompaniment by James C. Begg](#)



You can see more of Duncan's work and watch his really interesting videos on Facebook - [click here](#).

Also, you may wish to purchase an original painting or prints that you have seen or commission a new one of yourself or of someone else. If so, Duncan would be pleased to give you a personalised service and in the first instance, you can email him at scottishartist@blueyonder.co.uk. Prices start from around £120 for a portrait of 24" x 19", in pastel, unframed, with another £80 for a lovely frame. A single unframed print 9" x 6" would be around the £10 mark. Duncan can actually paint anything under the sun, as well as any and better than most.

Thanks a lot Duncan for such a wonderful insight into your work and talents. Much appreciated.

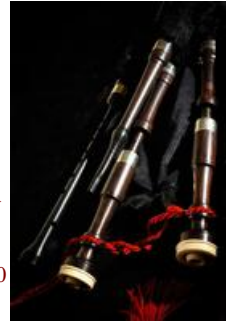
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