



Pipe Majors Piece

It's a huge undertaking, to take on the role of Pipe Major.

An even bigger one considering the history of this band, the names of those who have lead it in the past and the current position we find ourselves in.

I make no mistake I know I'm not a MacKinnon, a Turrell, a Foster, a Fergusson, or a Watt. But in saying that I'm totally honest about where the band is currently at it. Which isn't the dizzying height of Grade One anymore. These days, we are rebuilding at the bottom end of Grade 3.

Most people that have been around the band for a while will know me. For those that don't, I started with COW in 1984, and with the exception of 1 season where I played with another band (because we didn't have one put out on the park) , I have played in both number 1 and number 2 bands for just on 27 years. Had a few trips to the worlds and the Tattoo and 1 fun trip to Lorient. I can't imagine playing for any other band.

My thanks and gratitude to my predecessor Peter Menzies. For those not aware, there wouldn't be a COW today if Peter hadn't stepped up when did.

Yes we are rebuilding. We are not struggling for numbers, we've had 12 or more to most practices throughout the winter, almost unheard of, and still have half a dozen pipers to get back into the mix.

And as you read further on we are integrating 4 of the more advanced learners into the band with the goal of having them ready to go for the street march at Square Day.

So what can you do, I know many of you out there are sitting at home in front of the fire on a Tuesday watching Co-ro St. Well come down, have a listen, and if you enjoy it, dust off your pipes and come and have a tune with us. Gary Watt did and has! Its grade 3 guys, 1 set 1 medley. That's all.

If you are past the age of no return, and be careful here, John Hanning and Vern Andrews are still playing, then I would ask you to consider loaning the band your chanter / pipes so we in turn can loan them to the kids coming up from the learners group. We are not in the position to be able to buy new sets of pipes for these kids and mums and dads are reluctant to spend the money if little Johnny is only in it for 6 months to a year. All the proper paper work will be drawn up and the band will cover the insurance costs. Don't be shy.

What do I want to achieve, my 2 year goal is to get us to the top of grade 3 and we are working on that now.

Bruce Blacklock
Pipe Major
City of Wellington Pipe Band



City of Wellington Pipe Band Learners' Programme

On the 6th of July the City of Wellington Learners Programme held its first awards ceremony following a very successful year. The ceremony was a huge success.

The programme was established almost one year ago under the guidance of the recently retired Pipe Major Peter Menzies and past band member Graeme Welsh. It has been growing steadily in numbers and in recent months has progressed noticeably. Earlier this year, prominent Wellington piper and former Pipe Major of the Band, Davey Welsh, was appointed as Head Tutor. Under his guidance the Band is very fortunate to have the assistance of Phil Mair, Marion Horsburgh, Sandra Harry, Callum Gilchrist, Rob Perry, Steve and Megan Luckin, Campbell Orchard and myself, together making up a very skilled and dedicated tutor team.

The Learners, at present number around 20, meet in the band hall between 6 and 8pm on a Wednesday or Thursday night. They are grouped according to their standard of playing. Currently the skill level ranges from absolute beginners who are perfecting the scale, to our advanced group who we are presently integrating into the Band, with Lawrence Webster being the first to make an appearance with the band when he joined us for our recent performance at Irwell Rest home.

The awards ceremony saw each group play a small piece in front of friends and family. This was accompanied by some nibbles and was followed by a certificate and cup presentation, before the the night was capped off with a performance by the current COW Pipe Band. A special mention must go to Robin McPhee who was crowned the inaugural City of Wellington Pipe Band "Most Improved Learner." A large thank you should go to all our learners and tutors for their fantastic contribution to the night and on-going support of the Programme.

The Programme is in very good hands and will hopefully provide the Band, and more widely, the Wellington pipe band scene with a good foundation for the future. Any support from past and present members would be welcome. In particular if there are any former pipers who have a spare set of bagpipes that they would be willing to lend to the band we would love to hear from you.

Marcus
Vice President Education





The Rugby World Cup Roadshow



**Rugby World Cup 2011
Te Papa (Left) Fanzone before Scotland V Argentina (right)**



Wellington Gaelic Club Ceilidh



In Memory of Eric Skachill

Photo of Eric with band President Ian Telfar when he was appointed a life member of the band in 2009

Eric first learned drumming with the drum and bugle band at Rongotai College in the 1940s. Later when he went to join the Wellington Caledonian Society Pipe Band as a drummer he was told they had enough drummers and needed pipers, so he learned to play the pipes. Eric was a successful piper but in the mid 1950s he was asked to join the City of Wellington Pipe Band as a drummer, and he reverted back to drumming.

Eric was a member of legendary City of Wellington band that made an historic trip to Scotland in 1958. This trip reportedly cost over 16,000 pounds, which would be over \$700,000 in today's money!

Eric was key part of the City of Wellington drum corps which won many A grade NZ championships from the mid 50s up until the early 70s. He had a hand in running the corp, teaching learners, writing music, etc up until he first retired from pipe banding due to a lung infection. Eric had a hand in teaching such well known drummers such as Wayne Hobbs, Ian Hawkins and Alastair Pratt. Eric was a bit of a perfectionist with his drumming and still remembered the faults such players had when their names came up in conversation with me many years later.

Eric recommenced his drumming career by joining the Wellington Police Pipe Band with the irrepressible Colin Weston around 1980. Colin and Eric later teamed up in the early 90s incarnation of the Pipes and Drums of Wellington Scottish – Colin as tutor and Eric as leading side. That band had some success in grade 3. The band revived again in the late 90s when I played side drum along with Eric and two youngsters that he had taught. We performed well in grade 4.

We both played in the City of Wellington No.2 band in the mid 2,000s and then had a brief stint in yet another incarnation of a small Wellington Scottish band before returning to the City of Wellington in the late 2,000s. Eric's last contest with the band was in Masterton in 2010, after which he did finally retire although still talked about coming back when his health came right.

Eric's wife Margaret used to go to all the band contest and major band events with Eric until she passed away in 2006. They had four sons and a daughter. His daughter was the only one to take an interest in pipe bands and I think learned the pipes. Eric was not one to push his kids into what he might have liked them to do. His sons were all Soccer players and Eric and Margaret gave them great support in this. One became a Wellington rep.

Eric was a very dedicated and conscientious bandsman. Until his last year in the band, you could rely on Eric to be practice on time every week without fail. He never seemed to get sick and always had plenty of energy to go over and over music until it was right. It was also never too late to have a beer afterwards.

Heather Mosher, Band Manager: A Brief Bio

I started playing bagpipes while working towards a science degree at Queen's University in Ontario, Canada. Playing the practice chanter was an attractive alternative to studying organic chemistry, and from those fateful early days the instrument stuck.

Summer 2009 marked the year I finished university as well as the inaugural year of the competitive Queen's University Pipe Band, the first band I was a playing, uniformed member of. Under the leadership of a couple experienced, seasoned young pipers, a small group of students and recent alumni (most of whom had never played at a highland games before) forged a successful first season for the band, winning or placing at every band contest we entered and bringing home numerous solo prizes as well. I returned to Kingston last summer to play with the band for its second season, this time in Grade 4.

At the end of the summer I left Canada for Australia's sunny East Coast, which I traveled around for a few months before moving to New Zealand to pursue Diploma in Teaching at Victoria University of Wellington. It only took me four days in this country to track down a pipe band: I flew in on a Thursday, showed up at a City of Wellington band practice on Tuesday, and found myself playing solos at Square Day in Palmerston North the next weekend.

I was looking forward to playing at the NZ Nationals in March but instead was impressed by the support the piping and drumming community gave to the 100 Pipers Concert, held in lieu of the competition. At Easter I was up in Hastings with several other band members to participate in the Easter Highland Games solos, which was a refreshing and enjoyable weekend.

After Hastings I was elected to the position of Band Manager. I look forward to being involved with the running of the band through the coming year and am happy with the direction that the band is taking with its focus on working through competition music early in the off-season and expanding our performance repertoire, as well as recruiting new players from the community and through the learners' program. With the Rugby World Cup coming up and the 2012 New Zealand Nationals on the horizon, it is going to be both an exciting and a busy year!

Since going to pen with the original piece we have got our first contest out of the way. The band competed in the Set and Medley at Square Day and while we finished 4th overall I was really happy with the performance in the Medley where the 2 judges had the pipe corp 1st and 3rd. We turned out 14 pipers for the Set and 13 for the Medley. With the addition of the advanced learners now playing with the band we did the street march with an impressive 18 strong pipe corp.

I'd like to add here my thanks to Gary Watt, he's doing a fantastic job on the sound and we're looking forward to better performances coming in the new year.

Merry Christmas to all and all the best to everyone for 2012.

Bruce Blacklock

CONTACT DETAILS REQUIRED

We are " **DESPERATELY SEEKING** " the contact details of all of the past members of the City of Wellington Pipe Band.

The committee is in the process of putting together a complete list of past members and their current contact and address details.

As not all past members will be on email we would appreciate it if past members make contact with us via postal mail, telephone or email.

Mail - P.O.Box 2870, Wellington

Telephone - Ian Telfar 04 9764252 - John Nicholson 04 3838485 - Bruce

Blacklock 04 4731199

email - secretary@cowpb.org.nz

Upcoming Events

28 Jan (Sat) - Turakina Highland Games

18 Feb (Sat) - WHB Centre Contest (Provincials) at Scots College

Well that's the end of another newsletter, I suppose there is only one thing to say...

Deck the Halls with Yuletide Cheer,
Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!!!

Festive regards
Chris Golder
Editor

City Wellington Pipe Band News

Band Contact Details

PO Box 2870, Wellington 6140

Band Web Site: <http://www.cowpb.org.nz/>

Ian Telfar (President) - telfars@paradise.net.nz

Marcus Boshier (Vice President Education) - marcusboshier@hotmail.com John

Nicolson (Vice President, Finance) - john@irwell.co.nz

Heather Mosher (Manager) - kallunah@gmail.com