

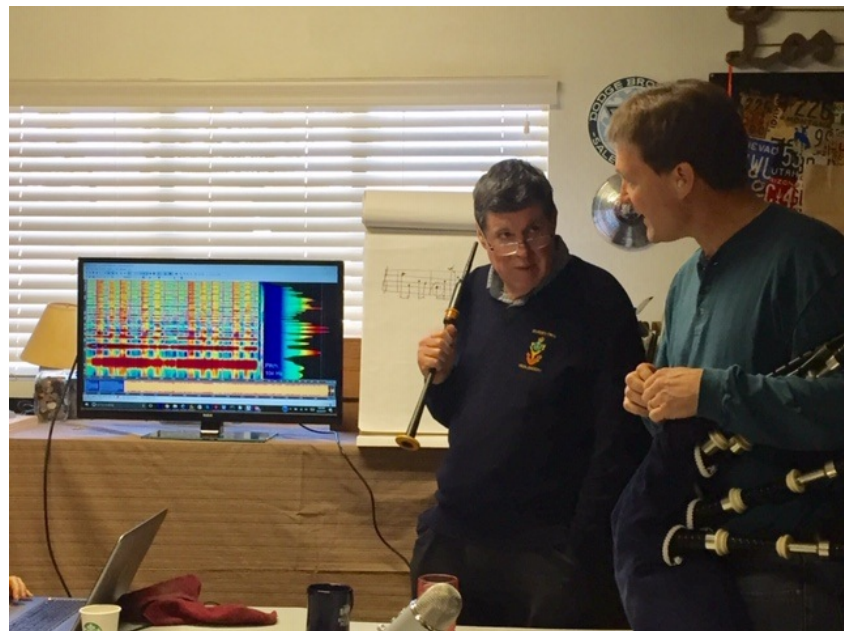


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Hi Friend,

I hope this finds you well.

Globally, we seem to be making varying degrees of progress with regard to the pandemic. As I write, I am happily ensconced in Arizona and working away fulfilling orders and generally making progress



with the North American side of Highland Reeds. I will, of course, need to return to operations in Scotland soon but I am in no rush now with the restrictions that apply currently. Friends in Scotland tell me that if I return just now then I will need quarantine for 10 days in a hotel room on arrival (at my expense, which will cost something in the region of £1,750).

So, I am happy to sit tight here for a while yet and enjoy the splendour of Arizona with my new wife and lifestyle. Feeding horses and cleaning up ... :-)

It is abundantly clear to me that piping will be changed forever after all this. The pandemic may well prove to have more of an impact on piping than the two world wars had. Piping, for the most part, and certainly in the army, paused for those few years. The Northern Meeting, the Argyllshire Gathering, the World Pipe Band Championships etc, all paused in those years. When life returned to normal things took off again with gusto but crucially, as they were before.

With this virus, however, I am not sure our pipe band competitions can return to the exact same format, particularly the crowds who flock to enjoy them. Travel is another huge factor, and this, of course, leads me to our leading solo piping events. Given that we are



now at the time of year when promoters and competing pipers gather their thoughts to them, it would be a brave man who would advocate for the Gold and Silver Medal events going ahead this year. This is of some concern to me as I am a member of the Northern Meetings Piping Committee.

This time last year I had just finished judging at the Queen Mary Highland Gathering and doing my grand tour north from LA heading to Los Gatos to do my weekend of workshops. I have received some warm messages from friends saying how they are missing our gathering/workshops, hopefully next year. There are photos [on the website from last year under About Bruce-Media and Photos.](#) I remember sitting in the airport at San Jose waiting to catch the plane back to London and there only being about 50 passengers for the plane and just wondering where all this was going to go to and mistakenly thing, "Ah well, it will all be over in a few months". I was also planning to attend the New Zealand Pipe Band Championship's next month. Luckily for New Zealand. they are going ahead as normal but without me, unfortunately for me and Karen.

I continue to be encouraged by the sheer amount of positive comments I receive constantly about my products, particularly my HR3 drone reeds and my moisture tube. It seems to be that pipers are settling on my products after much experimentation during this 'down time' and this is heartening. I am grateful to all who have contacted me, from the humble Grade 5 novice piper to the Gold Medallist (quite a few of those, in fact!). On this subject, I would like to thank Callum Beaumont, Iain Speirs, Stuart Liddell, Colin MacLellan, Niall Matheson, Cameron Drummond, not only for their positive feedback but for publicly playing and endorsing my products. Indeed, Stuart Liddell credits my moisture control system for providing him with the consistency he has enjoy over the past 10 years.

If you didn't listen to the sound of Cameron Drummond's pipes in last month's newsletter, here is another chance to do so. He has my HR3 drone reeds and moisture systems in his set up. Simply click on this paragraph.

*Here is a link to Colin MacLellan (pictured) playing a large number of Piobaireachd using my HR Reeds.*

I would like to end this month's newsletter by expressing my condolences to the family of Jimmy McIntosh who died recently. I had some lessons from Jimmy when I was in Dundee from 1976 -78. He did also, of course, serve in the best regiment! I'll write more about Jimmy in next month's newsletter. In the meantime, enjoy your piping.



Bruce Hitchings MBE BEM.

As ever, please send me photos or videos you'd be willing to share at [bruce@highlandreeds.com](mailto:bruce@highlandreeds.com) including a caption of event and date. Please also leave a product review on the appropriate produce page of my website – or leave a comment or video clip of you playing on the ['Submit your comment/playing' page](#).

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