



Bagpipes – Blow Them Up

A true gentleman is one who knows how to play the bagpipes but doesn't – R. Acket

The history of pipes is steeped in mystery and legend which roughly translated means you can make it up as you go along. It's often said that bagpipes are the missing link between music and noise. You either like them or you don't, there's no in-between. I fall into the latter category. I appreciate that visitors to our fine nation are intrigued to see grown men blowing into funny shaped tartan bags. However, when you've lived with a busking piper playing the same melody (out of tune) underneath your window for the best part of three long cold summers, your musical patience is tested to the hilt. My worst nightmare is the thought of being stranded on a desert island with a tone deaf piper continuously playing Amazing Grace.

Modern uses for bagpipes:

- 1 Milking cows.
- 2 Hot water bottle.
- 3 Garden watering can.
- 4 Boomerang that doesn't come back.
- 5 Car jack.
- 6 Television aerial.
- 7 Knitting needles.

The bagpipes are one of the oldest instruments in existence. The actual source of this much-loved mellow sounding utensil is not known. It probably has its origins in the Middle East, evolving in Europe alongside the fusion of early civilizations. Some people say the Irish gave bagpipes to the Scots as a joke and we've missed the gag.

Apparently the Roman Army employed a

- 8 Space satellites.
- 9 Fire bellows.
- 10 Fish bait for octopus.

horde of pipers - Nero loved them. Then again he was notorious for his cruelty, throwing Christians into large coliseums and forcing them to listen to bagpipe music.

So, were bagpipes imported and adopted by the Scots? It's possible that similar forms of pipes were invented at the same time in different countries.

A form of pipe was certainly being played in Scotland by the 1400s. This doesn't however answer the query of adoption. My only conclusion is that because Scotland is such a chilly country, much social activity takes place indoors and the bagpipes are the perfect serene instrument for the interior of a small Scottish living room.

This may cause a few Scots to choke on their rock-hard porridge - it is believed that pipes were popular in England prior to resettling in Scotland. The Highland pipe is only one of thirty different kinds of bagpipes that have appeared around the world.

Today, Scottish pipers are found busking, welcoming guests at functions or playing in marching bands.

A piper parking his car at the foot of Glencoe forgot to lock his door. Unfortunately he left a set of brand new bagpipes in the back of his vehicle. When he returned there were two sets of pipes on the back seat.



"The sound of bagpipes (burning on a stove) warms the heart"