

Maureen Knight interviews Andy May on 3 March 2016

Content: Andy has been involved with the Northumbrian Pipe Courses at Halsway Manor since they started in 2000.

Andy's Dad started to learn and so he learned with him, and later learned from Roland Lofthouse and Adrian Schofield.

Alan Corkett asked Colin Ross to run the first pipe course in November 2000 and Andy was the second tutor. 16 years later the course has really grown, and there's also a taster day run in parallel for newcomers to try the pipes.
Northumbrian Pipes.

Northumbrian Pipes are a small, quiet bagpipe with drones, fed by bellows rather than mouth, with almost as many notes as a fiddle so that opens up a wide repertoire of music.

This week Andy is leading a short course in making reeds and then heading off to play for some gigs.

He describes his first visit to Halsway manor, arriving in the dark, and then seeing the pale the next day and thinking "WOW, it's lovely!" but it was freezing in November which is why the course was changed to the spring!

Halsway is not near anything, and you could feel stuck here with the course and no escape from its participants, but that is one of the nicest things.

Halsway is a special place even when nothing is happening. This mid-week seems empty as usually we have 35-40 pipers plus staff. It's important to have new tutors because largely the same people return each year. This year new tutors, Alice Burn and Paul Knox, who are about the age I was when I taught my first course here.

My Band, the Andy May Trio, are exploring old manuscripts for Northumbrian pipes and injecting life into tunes previously unheard.

My "day job" is playing, teaching and making Northumbrian small pipes. It takes around 100 hours to make a set of pipes.

We're exploring the feasibility of running a pipe making course at Halsway Manor.

The only thing that would make Halsway better is to move it nearer to my home!