

# McCallum Solo Chanter Review

Today I received a timber McCallum Solo Chanter in the post. It's always nice to get something in the post! It was wrapped in bubble wrap and when opened it revealed a custom made tube complete with graphics, some of the nicest packaging I have ever seen on a piping product. No doubt this will ensure they arrive safely.



At first glance the chanter appears very well made. It has no threaded reed seat (a positive to me, as the reed can be pushed into place rather than twisted which can misalign the blades). The hemp was compressed (meaning it had been tested in a bagpipe, which is a huge plus).

Visually it was obvious that most holes were round, but B was slightly oblong. No bother as I usually have to carve B on most new chanters anyway (B, C and D are usually notorious for being flat). The oblong hole was a lot neater than I would have done!



*Willie McCallum testing chanter reeds.*

I tried a number of types of reeds and found that it seemed easy to reed and I achieved good results with almost every reed I tried. Piobaireachd G was as usual the note that decided which reed went best. I found that it wanted to waver a little and double tone on Piobaireachd G at first. I lifted the reed a little and it became worse. I sunk the reed and the problem was easily resolved with G producing a nice tone with a lot of volume, like most chanter more reliable with an easier reed. The chanter seems to like the reed to be sunk quite deep into the reed seat.

Volume up the chanter scale is quite uniform. It had a good bold top hand with a very clear high A. It is quite true, and discrepancies fixed with a little tape. These (as usual) varied between reeds. I had no urge to carve any notes, which is very unusual. High A was a little flatter than I would like but I suspect that will improve with playing and reed setting rather than carving (this has since been resolved with a different reed). High G needed a little tape with most reeds that were tried, but a lot less than most chanters usually require.

The chanter I would describe as quite bright rather than warm in tone and it produces good volume. It is a free feeling chanter that is very nice to play. This is one of the truest and nicest chanters that I have played straight out of the box. The chanter is very comfortable to play.

The chanter has now been given a few days playing and is getting better all the time. It sometimes takes a while to get used to how a new chanter behaves and true it up perfectly, but this chanter is very, very good and will definitely get a play in competition this year.

Characteristics:

- Bright.
- Good Volume.
- True scale.
- Controllable Piobaireachd G.
- Good stability with no notable faults.

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