

Ceremony at Edinburgh Castle to bid farewell to the Stone of Destiny

On Thursday Army pipers, members of [The Royal Regiment of Scotland \(SCOTS\)](#), and [Band SCOTS](#) represented the British Army in Scotland at a ceremony to mark the transfer of the Stone of Destiny from Edinburgh to the new Perth Museum.

The Governor of Edinburgh Castle, Major General Alastair Bruce OBE VR DL was the Senior Military representative. Members of Balaklava Company, the 5th Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland (BKA Coy, 5 SCOTS), based in Redford Barracks, provided sentries and a quarter guard at the Castle for the ceremonial procession including the First Minister, Lord Lyon, Secretary of State, Alister Jack MP, Permanent Secretary, the Rt Hon Lord Provost and invited guests representing the 'People of Scotland' departed the Great Hall towards the Esplanade.

Sadly on Thursday afternoon the rain was incessant and the mist low, so it was difficult to get any shots (from the other side of the Esplanade) of dignitaries. And while the First Minister made a speech, it was in the Great Hall and only some media outlets were allowed in to listen to it.



Despite the weather Musicians from The Royal Scots Dragoon Guards, Scots Guards The Scottish North Irish Yeomanry and The City of Edinburgh Universities Officers' Training Corps, all supported by the Army School of Bagpipe Music and Highland Drumming performed the Beating Retreat
pic.twitter.com/7l0t9N09ad

– Edinburgh Reporter (@EdinReporter) [March 14, 2024](#)



Piper Major Mark Macrae from the [Scots Guards](#), led the procession from the Great Hall playing 'The Return of the Stone', a tune composed by Major Gavin Stoddard MBE BEM, into Crown Square.



Pipe Major Mark Macrae, 49, has been in the Army for nearly 30 years and has travelled the world as a military musician. He has also taken part in various State Ceremonial events in London with the Scots Guards as Pipe Major, including Trooping of the Colour, and has been the Lone Piper during the Edinburgh Tattoo.

Mark, from Golspie in Sutherland, said: "That's what I joined the Army for, these incredible opportunities like today. Taking part in the Queen's Birthday Parades were very special and they achieve worldwide attention, so you feel that sense of duty and honour. It's exactly the same today, being part of the Stone of Destiny ceremony. It's a massive privilege to be part of it all because there's not too many people who get to be directly involved. This ceremony today is part of Scotland's history and my family is always very proud of the job that I do."

He was joined by fellow pipers who led as the procession crossed the drawbridge followed by musical accompaniment of the Band SCOTS. The pipers represented the [Royal Scots Dragoon](#)

[Guards](#), [Scottish and North Irish Yeomanry](#) and the [City of Edinburgh UOTC](#).

They then performed a collection of music Beating the Retreat.

Lance Corporal Maddie Lyons, 28, a bassoonist with The Band of The Royal Regiment of Scotland for nearly four years. She said: "It's great to be part of history and be among very high-profile guests and be an ambassador for the British Army. My bassoon plays a tenor line within the marching musicians, but each individual instrument has their own role within the band, with trombones in the front leading and clarinets bringing up the rear at the back.

"We played for the Coronation and the late Queen's funeral, and you always feel you are part of these huge, sometimes momentous, occasions. There's a lot of training to become proficient in what you do, but it's very much worth it. To get to play at Edinburgh Castle is an absolute honour for us all."

The Stone of Destiny is an ancient symbol of Scotland's monarchy, used for centuries in the inauguration of its Kings. Seen as a sacred object, its earliest origins are now unknown.

Today's ceremony formally marks the departure of the Stone from Edinburgh Castle.

