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[September Newsletter](#)

Dear Piping Enthusiast,

It's been a busy time of year and whilst the weather here in Glasgow has been a bit mixed, the piping season has been buzzing along quicker than the bees in my garden. There appears to be no sting in the tail, as Piping Live! and the Worlds were a resounding success yet again. It is strange of course how quickly these events come around and go again - quicker than the air out of a gortex bag when you stop blowing!

Again at this year's Worlds, the majority of the Grade 1 bands and indeed many others throughout the grades took the Begg option and produced the sound required. I wonder what the link is between Begg and World Champions - possibly one or maybe two bands in the last 36 years are not world winners without the power of Begg bags.

We are now two months into Brexit and whilst there still doesn't seem to be a definitive EU exit plan, all's well in many regards. The stock market is strong and exports are booming due to a weaker pound sterling - so all our prices for overseas customers have become even more competitive.

Yours aye,

James Begg

**Piping Perfection**

[www.beggbagpipes.com](http://www.beggbagpipes.com)

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## News.

Did you catch the terrible story about a piper's death associated with "mouldy bagpipes"? - see the article below. We have been inundated with queries and there is no argument that your pipes, like everything else in life, need to be kept clean and maintained on a regular basis. If you have any concerns in this regard, then please do contact us. The top players do of course keep their instrument in tip-top condition and the pipe will perform better for that. I suspect that the irregular player is more exposed to this issue although the piper in question below seemed to have played every day. Anyway, let's take this warning and look after our pipe.

I am off shortly to the [Northern Meeting](#) in Inverness and have kindly been invited to a Civic Reception. The piping will be excellent as will be the company, for sure. Will let you know in the next newsletter how it all went.



(Let's hope the tuning up process is a bit shorter than the time it took the great Mo Farah to win the 10000 metres at the Olympics.) The shop will be open in my absence and some say it works better that way.....lol.

On the book front, Fergie Macdonald the renowned and charismatic accordion player has brought out a new book of pipe tunes. Although not a piper himself, he has produced a book of pipe tunes called Puirt Pioba which sells for £15. Runrig is the well known tune composed by Fergie and played by FMM.

Craig Muirhead's book Arranged is also back in stock at £15. It's a collection of modern tunes arranged for the pipes and well worth getting into. Craig was mentioning he is off to Nairobi with the Strathallan School Band he teaches - I visited some 20+ years ago to play at the Kenya launch of the Land Rover Discovery. I remember wondering what to expect but I had a ball - mind you, it was hard work marching round the pool at the Hilton with full gear and feathered bonnet. The Tusker beer did however alleviate my thirst!

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## Special Offer - [Trap Dri](#)

Trap dri which is added to your tube traps helps disperse the moisture from the bag and is easy to fit. Will work best with split stock but fine on its own. It keeps reeds drier if that's an issue for you and prolongs bag life. 10% off which James will adjust at his end after you order.



## Field Report - The Worlds.



Congrats to FMM - world champions for the eleventh time and to all our other successful customers including Inveraray, Shots and many more from around the globe. Spirit of Scotland did themselves proud throughout the year and as I keep saying, I'm proud to have sponsored such an innovative and imaginative project - in the majors, they achieved a tremendous 4th, 5th, 6th, 8th and 10th (I must admit I didn't agree with the 10th at Dumbarton but that is the nature of the beast and I generally try and keep low profile on such matters).

It was good to hear a number of bands a few times during practice at Glasgow Green and also to re-ignite old friendships along the way as I know most of the guys. There is no way of taking my normal low profile with Gordon Walker about and my cover was blown. The Spirit to coin a phrase did do just that - spirited performances which added great interest and verve to the proceedings. They didn't quite spirit the world championship away but realistically that was a big ask - I am just glad to be a small part of the band and I'll drink to hearing more from them in future, I hope.

There was a suggestion from some quarters to replace the pipe band circle in competitions - I would totally disagree since it is the best formation by far. I watched grade 3B and enjoyed not just the 4 Scots band forming a perfect circle but every other band produced a wonderful circle as well - it's a glory to see and it's a circle for a reason. It's easy to form with sound produced to the middle by chanters which the P/M can watch, accompanied by wonderful harmonics to the rear from the drones.

It's really a no brainer - It's been tried in different formats since the 70s and alternatives have not worked. If we require a more fancy set up and audience interest, I'm sure Stuart Samson MBE ex-Director of Army Piping and Drumming is the man to consult with his military tattoo experiences being brought to bear - he does it brilliantly alongside his top notch piping and dress appearance. So let's go for semi circle or other formats for concerts, but don't mess with a tried and trusted full circle for competitions. Change is good but we need to be changing for all the right reasons.

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## Field Report - Piping Live!

Piping live was also a well run and smooth operation. It's one of the best festivals out and good to see lots of free events. I took in the quartets in the Concert Hall as well as many good and varied performances in George Square and at the Street cafe outside the National Piping Centre. There is so much on that it's impossible to fit it all in although the real devotees have their schedule planned down to the second. I was kindly invited to the Civic Reception at Glasgow City Chambers on the Thursday and met lots of interesting people over the course of the week - Roddy MacDonald of the Clanranald Collection book fame, Austen Diepenhorst of San Diego, Richard and fellow band members from the Cameron Highlanders also of San Diego, men of the Highlanders, 4th Battalion the Royal Regiment of Scotland (4 Scots) to name but a few - brilliant company all round.

The international flavour of piping just keeps growing and that is reflected in our weekly orders - the most recent new destination for us is Kowloon, Hong Kong - great and keep it coming.



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## A Warning! - time for a new bag and a detox.

Musicians who play wind instruments are being warned to clean their equipment thoroughly, following the death of a bagpipe player.

The man is believed to have died from a reaction to mouldy pipes which led to "bagpipe lung".

The 61-year-old, who practised every day, had been ill for a number of years.

His condition improved when he went abroad for a few months without his instrument. It was

then doctors realised the bagpipes might be to blame.

He is thought to have developed a bad reaction to mould and fungi found inside the moist interior of his bagpipes after they were checked in a laboratory.

Inhaling pathogens - microorganisms that can cause disease - had caused inflammation and led to irreversible scarring, doctors believe.

Writing in the journal **Thorax**, experts warned that such instruments should be cleaned regularly to reduce the chance of a similar tragedy.

Musicians are also being urged to bear in mind that a cough or any breathlessness could be linked to their practice.

Dr Jenny King, one of the team from Wythenshawe Hospital in Manchester which treated the piper, said if caught early there was a good chance of recovery.

She said: "If you can diagnose these problems early and remove the trigger then they can be treated and the prognosis is really good."

It should be noted it's all blown instruments and not just bagpipes that this issue really refers to and the chances of catching such an ailment are low in my opinion. The benefits to memory and fitness of playing a wind instrument far outweigh any potential disease.

Send your pipes urgently to Begg Bagpipes for a full detox if you think they need it - if you have the slightest thought that they could do with it then they most certainly do. A new bag would be the best solution of course but we do stock bag cleaner and disinfectant as well - let us know.

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## From the Archives

If you didn't guess who the likely lads were in the last newsletter, try Roderick J. MacLeod MBE and James C. Begg - they served their piping apprenticeship together at the famous College of Piping in Glasgow and in various bands before making their own individual mark on the world of Piping.

Editor

## YouReport

If you would like to report on any aspect of the Piping World from wherever you live, or if you would like to comment on any articles or issues, we'd be pleased to hear from you. Email to [bill@beggbagpipes.com](mailto:bill@beggbagpipes.com)

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