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## Newsletter

From: **bill@beggbagpipes.com**

Sent: 01 September 2008 13:57:23

To: wgbegg@hotmail.com

## Welcome to Begg Bagpipes

-----Est 1980 Glasgow city centre's oldest bagpipe shop-----

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### Newsletter - September

Dear Customer,

Welcome to our 7th Newsletter as we are getting towards the end of the outdoor Pipe Band season. It was a hectic week in Glasgow for the Piping Live! event and the World Championships but the highlight for me was being able to catch up with friends, some new and some old, from all corners of the globe- see the field report below.



Piping on the web<sup>®</sup>

Our piping world really is one great big family, and it is a pleasure to be part of it.

Yours Aye,

James C Begg

### Testimonials

If you would like to comment on any aspect of Begg Bagpipes for inclusion on the web site, we'd be pleased to hear from you - click on the link below and then my email link on the home page, or go to the Testimonials section on the web site.

Bill Begg

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

### News

Anne Lore from Brittany in France was in the shop recently and advised me she has a "Piobaireachd on the Beach" event on 21st September . The idea is just to play piobaireachd all day long on the beach and it's set in an ideal venue near St Malo . Full marks for this idea -it's original and great fun .

For further information please contact Anne at [lore.anne@wanadoo.fr](mailto:lore.anne@wanadoo.fr)

## Top Tip

As the late John Weatherston, proprietor of R.G. Hardie once remarked, "If you are struggling with your pipes, try the piano."

Just Kidding Guys!

When you are learning to play at first, it is important to get your technique correct. In order to achieve this, you will have to play very slowly -the objective behind this is to hear every grace note clearly and precisely. Doublings are very crucial in this respect in that you hear both of them separately. There can be a tendency to rush them and you don't hear the second grace note at all -so the objective is to have two grace notes equally timed and played at a slow pace. The speed will come on its own but keep it slow in the early stages however unmusical it may sound. Accuracy for the long term needs to be a major priority .

Throw-on Ds in particular are really hard so hearing a slow and clear low G as you produce this movement is paramount -don't speed up at all.

The scale also needs clean execution in particular from D to E. Be clean and precise with no fumbling - hear every note correctly and stop when you don't get it right. Go back time and time again until you get it -don't say it will be better next time -it won't.

We will discuss what throw-on D is best in future as there are different opinions as to which to play but that is another topic for a future newsletter.

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## The Top Three Tunes - by Mike Katz

1. The Blue Lagoon - jig by Peter MacLeod jr.
2. MacKay's Rant - reel (trad.)
3. The Pretty Apron - 2/4 March(trad.)



"The Blue Lagoon" is a great piece of music not merely because it is very challenging technically - on any instrument - but also because it contains so many great melodic ideas. It exhibits great inventiveness in its employment of many small phrases generally uncommon to bagpipe jigs and because of this should serve as a great inspiration to any composer of bagpipe music. It also sounds great when played on instruments other than the bagpipe. "MacKay's Rant" is the first tune in Angus MacKay's "Piper's Assistant". It is like a modern reel despite its age. I particularly like the fact that it changes key in the second part. Where "the Blue Lagoon" maintains interest in its intricacy, "Mackay's Rant" does so with its simplicity. "The Pretty Apron" is just a great wee 2/4 march made famous as the theme for many years on the piping program on BBC Radio Scotland. I am fond of "b" minor pipe tunes and I particularly like how this tune finishes on the "b" in the second part after it implies a more major second part. It is just a great and somewhat unusual tune. Mike Katz.

Mike Katz was born in Los Angeles Ca. and began playing the bagpipes at ten years of age. His biggest influence as a teacher there was John Massie. Since 1987, he has lived in Edinburgh where he played with the Scottish Gas Pipe Band and was fortunate to be amongst many great pipers, most notably Gordon Campbell, Willie McBride, and Cherry Anderson. Since 1997 he has played, toured and recorded extensively with the world famous Battlefield Band. Mike has many favourite tunes and his top three can change from day to day, month to month, and year to year - these three are his favourites from the 25th August 2008!

Thanks Mike, for your top tunes selection.

Watch out for other world class pipers making their selection in future issues.

[Click here to check out Battlefield Band's website](#)

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## September Special Offer

End of Season Special - 15% off all cow and



sheepskin bags when ordered online in September.



### Special Feature - Field Report from Piping Live! and the World Pipe Band Championships

The city was awash with bands and very rarely do you get so many pipers and drummers in every nook and cranny across Glasgow. It is interesting to hear all the different nationalities in the pubs and clubs which were supporting the Piping Live! event. I managed to catch up with some old and some new friends including Scott Macdonald over from the States with the



LA Scots and Iain Macdonald from Canada with his new book "Along the Way" - now in stock in the shop and online. Also met up with Peter Ten Dyke from Holland and the great characters from the Patiala Pipe Band of Pakistan. In fact, the list is endless and demonstrates how popular the bagpipe is throughout the world .

I popped into one of the late night sessions at the Piping Centre in Glasgow and met up with Masaki and Grant from the degree course. I taught them briefly on the course some time ago about bag making and it was a great night catching up on their current situation - you couldn't meet two more like-able young guys. The night was very relaxed with various small pipe groups performing, but perhaps it lacked a bagpipe in full flow .However it was more about meeting and greeting and getting on with people. Mike Katz was there and it was good to meet him after having spoken to him on the phone so many times. Don Bradford, the new Strathclyde Police P/M, was also attending as was Emma Buchan of Boghall.

The friendly atmosphere also extended to the World Pipe Band Championships on the Saturday. Got a nice picture of my good friends Peter MacInnes and Kenny MacKenzie -that's Kenny, myself and Peter from left to right in the photo. Peter is the Piping Instructor for the Glasgow Schools and was formerly Pipe Major of the 2nd Battalion Scots Guards. I have also known Kenny for many years from his time in Knightswood Juveniles, Renfrew Pipe Band and Toyota.

The day was a lot better weather wise than forecast, much to everyone's relief. The winners were in reverse order to last year with Simon Fraser University taking first place ahead of The Field Marshall - pleased to report that this was a ONE-TWO for Beggs Bags again. Consistency seemed to be the SFU's tactic and produced solid performances in both disciplines of march, strathspey and reel, and medley .Ensemble was also a major factor for them i.e the ability for pipers and drummers of a band to merge and play in one unit. The results this year from various judges seemed to vary quite a lot for some reason and was perhaps due to the inconsistency in performance this year with some bands .

Shotts, in third position, made the headlines by facing the audience briefly towards the end of the selection.This is certainly a good way of being more audience friendly but perhaps it is more appropriate for the concert stage. As I mentioned in a previous newsletter, there is now a push from some quarters for semi circles and innovation i.e orchestral set ups but caution is needed here. The bagpipe is an outdoor instrument principally and shouldn't be confused with indoor, classical set-ups - leave this to small pipes and the like. The next three places in Grade 1 were taken by Boghall, O'Tooles and Strathclyde Police respectively. The new superband, Spirit of Scotland, qualified for the final and this was a great achievement considering how little time they had to prepare together- they had a big push with the rehearsals in the final week and it paid off.

It is a shame for the bands that did not qualify like the LA Scots, as the financial outlay for them to appear in Glasgow is huge. It's a long way to come to play for 6 or 7 minutes and that works out as at least \$6,000 a minute!

James C Begg



**The 2008 World Champions. Simon Fraser University.**

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