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[August Newsletter](#)

Dear Piping Enthusiast,

This coming Saturday will see me taking the short trip to Dumbarton for the [Scottish Championships](#) which is the last major championship before the Worlds on the 18th

August. It's a great setting with free entry - would other competition organisers please take note! In the recent three major Championships, the Grade 1 placements have been unusually varied so it will be important for a band to put a marker down at the Scottish with an eye on the coveted Worlds. The ensemble judge seems to be in the commanding position and would appear to determine which band gets the nod at the end of the day - I not too sure if this should be the case. There are of course piping and drumming judges but the ensemble judge seems to make or break you. It was noticeable recently that a band who was last or nearly last in both drumming and piping actually came out top for ensemble. Can anyone tell me how that operates or indeed how it's possible to have such discrepancy?

Following my comments in previous newsletters about why the Worlds may be stagnating, it appears the number of bands attending this year is down by 6 to 213. I have previously suggested if the Worlds were doing as splendidly as all the jaw flapping suggests, then we should be seeing a large increase year on year instead of static and now decreasing numbers - I'd be worried about this if I was in charge. It is of course hugely expensive for bands to commit year on year and perhaps this is an area that could be addressed by financial help in some form from Glasgow - hotels, bars, shops and so on all benefit from the huge influx of visitors to the Worlds so let's find a way to come up with some funding.. Surely to goodness it's time bands just got some sort of support as without them, there would be no event and no cash cow for the City.

Yours aye,
James C. Begg
Piping Perfection

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News.

We have lots on during [Piping Live!](#) week. We will be at the large trade show in the Concert Hall from 11 a.m to 7 p.m on Thursday 16th August. This is the second year of this event and an expanded trader list. The trial event last year at the College of Piping was good and proved to be a hit. Please pop along to say hello and spend a few groats should you so wish. There will be no better time or place to stock up on all your piping needs and tuck them into your suitcase. The big concert on the 15th also in the Concert Hall features SLOT - St Laurence O' Toole from Eire. This will be a great concert and not to be missed. This is organised by The Glasgow Skye Association and their Band benefits from the proceeds - the concert is their main fund raiser so please get along and support not just SLOT but the hard working people of Skye.



Interesting Piping Folk

During my working week and indeed socially, I meet lots of most interesting Piping folk, some of whom have achieved greatness in the classic sense and others who have achieved greatness in their own way. I will try to introduce you to some of these over the coming newsletters.

I recently caught up [P/M Jim Motherwell](#), when he was in Scotland performing at a high level function. This former Sovereign's piper and now Eton College's piping teacher since 2003 has been a long time patron and we have some more pipes ready for him for the start of the new school term in September. Check out the link to read more about Jim - he's a great guy with a hugely successful piping career.

I also recently had the pleasure of supplying a nice lightweight synthetic pipe to Harry Robertson of Tighnabraich - he is an amazing 92 years young and probably our most loyal and longstanding customer, going back to 1980 when Begg Bagpipes was established. Harry has a lovely full ivory pipe that he bought from me years ago but is now finding them slightly on the weighty side. The synthetic set is zero maintenance, easy to blow, lightweight and fairly inexpensive at £380. These are ideal for Harry and what an achievement to be still playing in your nineties. Well done Harry - excellent.



Special Offer - [Practice Chanters](#)

15 % off practice chanters. Treat yourself to a new chanter and enjoy your practice more.

Are you content with your tone? Could it be better? Try the Begg wooden standard size chanter or a synthetic one with the special discounts for August only, along with free post worldwide.

James will apply discount at his end.



Special Report - Judges and Pupils

We noticed an interesting article in the Telegraph about judges and pupils. The article below has many parallels with the ongoing issue of teachers judging pupils in piping and is well worth a read. There are mixed views within the Piping fraternity and the subject has been receiving a good airing over time in Rab Wallace's enjoyable [Piping Press magazine](#). It almost exactly the same issue for piping as it is for piano.

Click to check out the article [Leeds International Piano Competition](#)

I favour the angle that teachers should not be judging their pupils even if they claim the other judges can provide independent input and balance, and that they themselves can act in an impartial manner. The pupil is placed in an invidious position - if he/she wins, people will say "it's his/her teacher so what would you expect" and if he/she doesn't win, maybe it's because the teacher has taken the opposite line and come down hard to avoid any thoughts of bias. The teacher is also in a difficult place and the last thing anyone should be doing is casting any aspersions on teachers' integrity - they should be beyond reproach. They are all doing a brilliant job and should receive our unreserved praise. So keeping teachers out of judging their own pupils would be my view.

What are your thoughts? Who's right and who's wrong or do both sides have merit in their arguments?

Do please let us know. Email to bill@beggbagpipes.com

In passing.....

I recently managed 36 holes of golf in one day down in Wales - I have not played that many rounds of golf before and so 36 in one day was a bit of a daunting challenge. My brother Bill, your newsletter editor, organises the annual Jaguar Land Rover golf day at the Rolls of Monmouth course. The estate was previously owned by Charles Rolls and it was from here that the first Rolls Royce emerged. The Rolls is a wonderful course and the famous Celtic Manor is not far away. Sadly there was no Rolls car or a Jag on offer for a hole in one - come on Bill - a must for next year. This has nothing to do with Piping but an insight into my other activities. I can also report that as four Scotsmen on a raid south of the Border, we made our presence felt with our Team name - The Jock Straps - and as you might expect, we had some fine uisge-beatha to keep us going in these foreign lands.



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

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