

Welcome to Begg Bagpipes

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

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Newsletter - August

Dear Piping Enthusiast,

Welcome to August's newsletter.

We are in the midst of preparing for a busy August and it's arrived far more quickly than I would have imagined - and it means another year has been and gone, but the business remains strong in these difficult times.

I notice Scotland is going to have an invasion of hornets and wasps at the end of July but I would suggest this is far less newsworthy than the invasion that will happen in the month of August - when thousands of people from all round the globe descend on Scotland for Piping Live!, the World Championships on Glasgow Green, Cowal Games in Dunoon and the solo piping in Oban to name but a few.

The Simon Fraser University Pipe Band concert on August the 12th is a sell out, with only standing areas remaining - what an accolade for the Band. I suspected this might be the case and purchased the tickets in good time. It's a great venue for the SFU and I wonder if they will be as outstanding as their last concert here in 2000 - if so, that would be tremendous because the last one was, without doubt, one of the all-time great pipe band concerts.

Yours Aye,

James C Begg

www.beggbagpipes.com



News

PIPING LIVE! GLASGOW INTERNATIONAL PIPING FESTIVAL

If part of this news section looks familiar, it is and is a repeat invitation to catch up with Begg Bagpipes if you are in Glasgow during the Piping Live! week. We would like to invite all along to the shop on Wednesday 12th

August, Thursday 13th August and Friday 14th August from 2.30p.m. for demonstrations of how we turn the pipes and also how the bags are made. You can select the skin for your bag if you wish and we will forward it when

made. Alternatively, buy your african blackwood practice chanter as it comes off the lathe. Should be good afternoons with all the piping banter as well! We are also supporting the Piping Live! Event on the Tuesday at the street cafe outside the Piping Centre. James will be there to add to the afternoon with free advice on any aspect of piping.

For those of you who want to make August a truly Celtic month, head to Lorient in Brittany, France from 31/7-9/8 for the the world's largest gathering of Celtic cultures. Each year over 650,000 visitors attend this lively festival that celebrates Celtic creative arts. During the 10-day event, over 4,500 artists perform music, theatre and dance for the amassed crowds. Established in 1971, Celtic men and women continue to flock to the Breton harbour town of Lorient to express and celebrate their heritage. It's a real treat for anyone interested in Celtic culture and visitors can experience fiddle music, bagpipe lessons, Gaelic workshops and ceilidhs. There are also plenty of opportunities to sample traditional Celtic food and drink. A well known Scottish piper and entrepreneur, Tom Johnstone, is organising the representation from the Scottish side and you can be sure the Scots will be making a valuable contribution.

[Click here for Piping Live! website](#)

Top Tip - Cane Drone Reeds - part 2

Make sure you have a good secure fitting at the drone reed seat. This is hugely important and more so than you might think. The drone reed should fit securely into the reed seat (ie the bagpipe drones where the bottom joints meet the stocks). Bagpipe reed seats vary tremendously from maker to maker and even from the same maker. Use waxed twine at the end of the reed, either black or yellow, to give a nice even fit. You may also want to take original twine off altogether since we don't want two separate pieces of twine as one usually ends up in the drone section as you take the reed in and out to alter it. The waxed hemp gives grip and also stops the twine rotting -however if you want some moisture absorbtion, wax the untreated hemp with thermowax initially for the first layer for grip and leave the rest untreated. You could also use beeswax but this is more of a moisture repellent than an item that gives grip. Set the reed well into the reed seat but not too far. When the new reed has settled, you can change this position for optimum tuning - i.e. further in sharpens reed and pushes the top section further up and conversely further out flattens and the drone top comes down. This will all depend on the make of pipes you have -some are sharp and some flatter and some people struggle to stop tops falling off with others not getting them high enough. This also depends on the pitch of your chanter and this is where it's important to get the combination right -sharp drones with a low pitched chanter and vice-versa are not good. As a gauge, the tenors should sit about 1/4 inch on the hemp on the tuning pin. The bass mid section should be about 1 and 1/4 inches above the mount on the tuning pin with the top joint section of the bass showing 1/8 inch of hemp . This is a static joint usually but can be used for

tuning on occasions. It's the mid section that is crucial for tuning and creating a solid bass. Reverting back to a previous topic, it's crucial that the hemping is neat tidy and not overly tight -without good hemping none of the above will work.

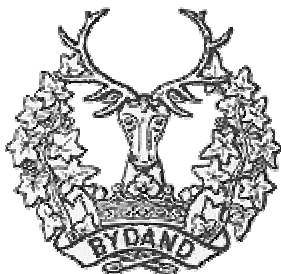
Part 3 to follow in next month's issue



The Top Tunes Selection - by Mr Martin Cowell

1. The 24th Guards Brigade at Anzio - a 2/4 march by P/S K.G Roe, 1st Battalion Scots Guards.
2. The Crisis - a 2/4 march by P/M J.B. Robertson, 2nd Battalion Scots Guards.

Cap badge of the Scots Guards shown.



3. Doornkop - a 6/8 march by P/M George S MacLennan, 1st Battalion Gordon Highlanders.
4. Kitchener's Army - a 6/8 march by P/M George S MacLennan, 1st Battalion Gordon Highlanders.

Cap badge of the Gordon Highlanders shown.

I thought it would be a nice theme to continue with another of the bastions of the bagpipe making world and ask my long term friends and business associates, David Naill and Company, for some favourite tunes. Bagpipe maker Leslie Cowell began his career in bagpipe manufacture as an apprentice to the famous London bagpipe maker Henry Starck. In 1955, Les later worked for instrument makers Boosey and Hawkes, and eventually started David Naill & Co. in 1976. His years of training and experience as an instrument maker went into the design and manufacture of the Naill bagpipe, and in the early years of the company David Naill set new standards of excellence and expectation in the way bagpipes are finished. We all evolve over the years and whilst I make my own range of pipes, I still supply D Naill

products and pipes as it allows customers to have a broader choice. Les' son Martin Cowell is perhaps now more involved in the business than Les and this month, Martin's selection is in the spotlight. He clearly has a leaning towards some of the great Army pipers and composers as his selection shows and we have a great Army piping heritage to enjoy.

Thanks Martin, for your top tunes and we look forward to your Dad's selection in a future issue.

[Click here for more on Les and Martin Cowell](#)

Special Offer -10% off everything in the shop - see details below

10% off everything in the shop for those who visit in person on Wednesday 12th August, Thursday 13th August and Friday 14th August from 2.30p.m. during our demonstrations of how we turn the pipes and how the bags are made.

Look out for more great offers coming soon! At the point of purchase, we will price match any product of the same quality from another supplier.

Special Report - Spotify.com

I have just discovered a sensational new music website where you can listen legally to all sorts of music free of charge. You can't download but all you need to do is link your computer to some good quality speakers. Piping is poorly represented at the moment but that may improve as the site develops. If you like rock, pop, jazz, blues, country, classical or folk, then this site is a must. The Tannahill Weavers, one of Scotland's leading folk groups and with whom I played the fiddle many years back, are worth checking out. The other limiting factor at the moment is that it is only available in the UK, France and Spain - I'll keep you posted when more countries are on the site.

Bill Begg

[Click here for Spotify](#)

YouReport

If you would like to report on any aspect of the Piping World from wherever you live, we'd be pleased to include it in this Newsletter and our website - click on the link below and then my email link on the home page, or copy and paste bill@beggbagpipes.com

Thanks

Bill Begg

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