

Welcome to Begg Bagpipes

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

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Piping on the web[®]

Newsletter - February

Dear Piping Enthusiast,

Welcome back to our newsletter after our New Year hiatus.

I've been out and about socially this past month with the highlight being the Glasgow Highland Club's dinner on the 25th of January. It's held just across the road from my shop in Bath St at the Arts Club -Glasgow's oldest members' club and so it's really handy to get to. The Arts Club has a fantastic hall for a

small function of around 120 people. You would never believe the hall is there as it's hidden in a building that just looks very standard for Bath St. It has 2 lovely huge wooden fireplace walls at either end with painting all round the room. It was possibly enhanced by the famous Glaswegian architect and designer Charles Rennie Mackintosh when he was a student, but then again, these days it seems everyone and their uncle is claiming that he did something to their building. The Highland Club itself is a very old society and whilst I don't get the chance to go often, I'm proud to be a member. We had John Wilson playing Flame of Wrath after the 3 course dinner as well as club members singing in gaelic. One song, the classic Brown Haired Maiden, caused me to look at it differently when I heard it sung rather than played - it became a lovely work of poetry and not just a nice tune. We also were treated to the tremendous Bobby Harvey Ceilidh Band and two superb award winning singers Calum Macaulay and Calum Mackecherin. I also caught up with some fine characters from the piping scene, including Iain MacLellan, Joe Noble, Kenny MacLean and Andrew Frater.

I'm off to the 65th celebration party of the College of Piping on Saturday the 30th Jan and will report back on this event in the next issue.

Yours Aye,

James C Begg

www.beggbagpipes.com



News

We welcome Lothian and Borders Police (formerly Edinburgh Police) under P/M Ian Duncan to Begg Bagpipes as customers for our sheepskin bags. We hope this move will provide them with more "firepower" as they strive to get back to the type of results they were regularly achieving in the early '70s with P/M Iain MacLeod, including back-to-back World Championships. We wish them well. Repeat customers recently have included Mamma Mia, Harrods and Eton College and there has also been a notable upsurge in interest from Australia and New Zealand - more on this to follow.

Top Tip - Blowpipe Valve

If your blowpipe valve does not work at a crucial time, don't panic - you can use the tip of your tongue as a valve. It's not easy to do this but it might get you out of a sticky spot. I seem to remember the gregarious and flamboyant Mr John D. Burgess M.B.E using his tongue all the time - no valve at all!

The airstream blowpipe comes complete with a very reliable valve and also allows better air flow. It has a broader hole to let the air flow and the valve is also broader. Another new item is the moose valve which is proving popular too. Again, its valve is efficient and it can catch some moisture as well. So if you don't like a tube trap, this may be a good item for you. See this Month's Special Offers below.



The Top Tunes Selection - by the late Greig Sharp of Kintail Bagpipes

1. Kilbowie Cottage - a fine four part 2/4 march performed particularly well by Kenny MacDonald. Greig also liked the Burgess style of execution.
2. Caber Feidh - the strathspey.
3. Mrs MacPherson of Inveran - an outstanding reel, delivered to perfection by P/M Angus MacDonald.

Greig started to learn the pipes at the age of ten, and went on to play in the 55th Glasgow Company Boys Brigade Band, the Clan Fraser Band and the Cameronians. At the young age of 22, he

opted not to go for his Pipe Major qualification in the Army but instead took up the post as manager of the world famous bagpipe making company Peter Henderson Ltd. 10 years later, in April 1971, he decided to set up his own company, Kintail, and from day one, Greig insisted on quality and commitment to customers being the principal forces that would drive the business forward. In time, he expanded the business to incorporate other family members, and Kintail enjoy a very fine reputation within the piping fraternity. Sadly, on December 5th 2009 after a long illness, Greig passed away and in his honour, we share his favourite tunes with you.

Watch out in future issues for other leading figures in the world of piping and pipe bands making their Top Tunes selections.

[Click here for The History of Greig Sharp](#)

Online Special Offer

In support of the Top Tip above, we've taken 15% off the price of the airstream blowpipe, now £43.67 and 15% off the moose valve, now £18.09. 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.

Celtic CONNECTIONS



Field Report

Saturday 16th January 2010

On the occasion of the annual Celtic Connections pipe band concert in Glasgow, I enjoyed a pleasant afternoon listening to two of Begg Bagpipes customers, The Robert Wiseman Dairies Vale of Atholl PB and the Inveraray PB. I particularly wanted to hear Inveraray since I had not heard them playing during 2009 when they scooped all the majors in Grade 2 - I was not disappointed with their quality. The Vale obviously being the more established band were a big draw too. It proved again to be a well balanced choice of bands as both offered a varied and different programme -a bit like last year when the in-form Strathclyde Police and the French band Bagad Cap Caval provided a good contrast of styles. Both Bands use the Begg Bag as you might expect and I think it's fair to say their sound was enhanced by this product -full sound -solid starts -and posture better

than you would find with other bags on the market. It was obvious that both bands had put a huge amount of effort into the event and were well up for it, at a time of the year when other bands are only beginning to stir from their "hibernation". At £12.50 it was great value for money.

The Inveraray Band were superb in the variety of their performance, with a highlight being the girl tenor drummers doing a highland dance as the whole band performed next to them. There was also some nice accompaniment from Donald Shaw on keyboards, and from Ali Hutton and Ross Ainslie on guitar and mandolin respectively. Donald is also one of the organisers of this very fine event. The hairs were standing on end with the slow air on key boards and the haunting sound of the pipes. Stuart Liddell directs this very young band with his usual casual but authoritative persona - brilliant! He is particularly good with youngsters and deserves a lot of credit. Well done Stuart (and the beard suits you as well!).

The Vale had a more robust sound and were perhaps going for a more driving performance than Inveraray. They had a very no nonsense approach and P/M Adrian Cramb, like Stuart, kept the band focussed and delivered a great selection of tunes.

There was no programme for the event which was shame and we had the well known presenter Iain Anderson in attendance. Whilst he is professional at what he does, you get the impression he had not really done his homework beforehand - his general chat could have been used anywhere and was not specific to this event.

Whilst we seem to be going more down the road of indoor playing, the question still remains as to whether or not pipe bands are suited to indoors, as they are fundamentally outdoor instruments - it can at times seem too overbearing when indoors. However, the Lomond and Clyde Pipe Band are being very audacious with an invitational pipe band event to be held in the very pukka Radisson Hotel, next to Glasgow Central station on the 20th of March. This is an all day event starting at 12.15 and going on till the evening. You can get your tickets at tickets-scotland.com. Well done for a different and innovative approach.

At the end of the concert, the large audience enjoyed the two bands playing together and that was an impressive ending to a wonderful concert.

James C. Begg

Special Report

On Thursday the 14th of January, Begg Bagpipes were pleased to make a trip to support the juvenile band of Boghall and Bathgate at their regular practice night

held in Whitburn in West Lothian. This part of the band is run by Ian Bowden and Ian wanted me to explain to the up and coming youngsters a bit more about pipe bags and how to maintain them. It was not so much that Ian could not do it himself but felt outside input would add to the effective tuition that he provides. It proved to be an interesting night and I hope the pipers gained an insight into what I do. I was more than impressed by the amount of teaching work that was going on - the novice juvenile band and the juvenile band were practising at the same time with tuition from many of the grade 1 drummers and pipers. The grade 1 band practice followed on afterwards. So all in all quite a set up and this will keep Boghall with a throughput of pipers and drummers for many years to come. We have been supplying the band for a few years now and it's great to see them going from strength to strength. Ian, thanks for your band tie and your invitation.

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

bill@beggbagpipes.com

Thanks
Bill Begg

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*Begg Bagpipes
202B Bath Street
Glasgow, Strathclyde G2 4HF*