

## Welcome to Begg Bagpipes

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

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### Newsletter - January

Dear Customer,

As we move into a New Year and reflect on what we have done in 2008, that well known Burns line from Scots Wha Hae comes to mind - "Now's the day and now's the hour". With 2009 being the 250th anniversary of the birth of the great Bard, I am also reminded that this song is the famous first tune in volume 1 of the College of Piping Tutor, and the legendary Seamus McNeill said at this point in the tutor that if you don't know this song, then don't bother taking up the pipes. I laugh a bit at this, because at 12 years of age, I did not know it! No doubt it was said tongue in cheek, like a lot of the dry humour which features throughout this tutor and all his other works .



Piping on the web<sup>®</sup>

This last year has flown by and I am not sure if it's an age thing, or just that I have been so busy running the business and managing the shop. It has been a successful year for us in many respects and not least of all from the excellent feedback we get on customer satisfaction. Recent returning customers are the Vale of Atholl Band with a large investment in bags, and we also have orders from our long-standing customer, Strathclyde Police, to be completed early in the New Year. So it's off to a hectic start in 2009 , and long may it continue in these troubled economic times.

We wish you and your family all the very best for a healthy and prosperous 2009.

Yours Aye,

James C Begg

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

### 2009 Predictions

It is going to be a big year in Scotland, with the Scottish Government's initiative called Homecoming Scotland. In addition to celebrating our heritage and what Scotland has given to the world, it will have a very positive effect on business as well. For any of our overseas customers planning a trip to be part of the celebrations, we would be pleased to welcome you in our shop in Glasgow. For more information, click on the link below.



On the piping front, I would think that Strathclyde Police will once again become the major force they used to be. With their quality of players and new Pipe

Major, I can see them doing well. The new superband, Spirit of Scotland will play again but maybe not at the World Championships. We will see a bold move from them, with a trip to compete on foreign shores or in fact something even more stunning. The O'Tooles will also be right in there, with the perennial favourites Simon Fraser University and the Field Marshall maintaining the quality that we are used to. In the solo piping world, there would appear to some good young talent coming through and this will liven up the scene somewhat.

## [Homecoming Scotland](#)

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### Top Tip

In the piping world, there would appear to be so many wild myths and untruths that it is almost farcical. A classic seems to be that by adding a sole to a pipe chanter, you can somehow affect the sound - I would suggest that whilst it helps the appearance, an imitation ivory sole or ivory sole or silver only helps to provide a professional appearance and will not make you sound any worse or better. The silver sole may if anything help give a nice solid weight and platform to the bottom of the chanter and give some degree of balance, in that the chanter remains like a pendulum clock i.e. totally fixed downwards and does not move until the last gracenote is implemented. Whilst such examples are part of the fun and mystic, it has caused the problem of knowing what is correct and what is not i.e. "my teacher told me this so it must be right." This therefore leads us to say you learn not just the good things from your mentor which is great but also the myths and perhaps shortcomings of the mentor. Hopefully, we all can say "I'm not sure, check this out etc" but I get the feeling that in piping, it's usually "I'm right and everyone else is wrong." Because we do not always interact with each other as much as we perhaps should, we find ourselves in a slightly lonely world and this is even more so with regard to solo or individual piping, when hours are spent practising on your own. This seems to have stemmed from the lack of the written work on the bagpipe as it has fundamentally been passed on from tutor to pupil verbally.

So it is important to try and find not just a knowledgeable teacher, but one that can direct you down the correct path and be able to get on with you on a personal level as well -and I don't mean just in the beer tent (which of course is also of value, if they are buying!)

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### The Top Three Tunes - by P/M Don Bradford

1. Hugh Kennedy - a 2/4 march by Peter R. Macleod.
2. The '98 Jig - a jig by Gordon Duncan.
3. Walking the Plank - a horn-march by E Rigler.



Originally from Aughnacloy, Co. Tyrone, Don Bradford has played with many top bands including Boghall & Bathgate, David Urquhart, 78th Fraser Highlanders, Strathclyde Police, Black Bottle and the Field Marshal Montgomery. Don was recently appointed to the position of Pipe Major of

Strathclyde Police following this year's British Pipe Band Championships and will be doing everything possible to bring the Police championship success in the years to come.

Begg Bagpipes and Strathclyde Police have had a long and successful relationship and we wish Don and the Band all the very best for the future.

Thanks Don, for your top tunes selection. Watch out for other world class pipers making their selection in future issues.

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## January Special Offer

This is the time of year to be practising as much as possible, and to this end we have a special offer on practice chanter reeds.

1. Order 2 red ones and receive a third free - £9(incl. vat) instead of £13.50.
2. Order 2 black and white ones and receive a third free -£7.06( incl. vat) instead of £10.59

We also have a couple of practice chanters recently just arrived in the shop- a Lawrie wooden practice chanter at £70 and an unmarked old chanter which is possibly a Henderson. If you are interested in either of these, please drop us an email.

[Click here for reeds](#)

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### Special Feature

Most people mainly associate Begg Bagpipes with producing outstanding bags, but we also manufacture our own pipes and refurbish/upgrade pipes and chanters. The same attention to detail and hand-craftsmanship that we are well known for on the bags are also put into the pipes and chanters -a nice example of a hand crafted practice chanter in silver is shown here.

The African Blackwood practice chanter starts from ordering the hand engraved hall marked silver to the customer's design requirements -in this case celtic knot. Other options like thistle zoomorphic are also available. The wood at this time has already been seasoned fully and bored,



and is set aside ready for the silver when it has been made and assayed i.e. hall-marked. At this crucial stage, we then have the challenge to marry the two carefully together as both the silver and the wood are delicate. A good fit is essential and this is where we have the advantage of a hand finish -millimeters are taken at a time. Eventually the chanter is tested for pitch and the all important mark of quality is stamped on the chanter neck, J BEGG-GLASGOW, again with great care and by hand.



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## 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](mailto:bill@beggbagpipes.com)

Thanks

Bill Begg

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

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[Past Newsletters](#)

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