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-----Est. 1980 Piping Perfection-----
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Dear Piping Enthusiast,

Whilst life is a little unusual currently, we can look at many positives. Sales of my fleshy brown, nicely priced sheepskins have been great and flying out the door, especially to the United States. The sterling exchange rate must help a lot as it does to our exports all over the world. I have now finished making this particular fleshy brown batch and so only have the last few of a standard and small size available - check out the [website to order](#). Due to my pernickety attitude, I do have a store of skins built up over the years which have not quite made my first cut selection and whilst they will function and do the job, they haven't been utilised to-date. I am wondering if I should release these onto the market at a price which may give people a good entry point to sheepskin and all the benefits and enjoyment a good sheep can bring. I do have some New Zealand alum tanned sheepskin that are just a tad more porous than I would really like but will be a good buy for someone - I think these will be available later in the year when I get the time to make them.

Another good thing at the moment is that all the little jobs in the house are getting done along with a clear office desk - miracles do indeed happen! Begg Bagpipes remain open and we have no problem in supplying reeds, hemp and bagpipes to your specific requirements.

So be positive - the sun's out in Scotland, summer's round the corner, my tan is fab and the beard apparently suits me. The nightly walk keeps the heart going and cycling is fab (even if there are a far too many other cyclists around as well). So there you are - positivity goes a long way and my glass is of the half full variety (and often empty too quickly). Thanks to all who sent in pics and articles. This month's special offer is worth taking up - see below.

Please keep in touch and let me know how you are keeping - and with time on your hands, I hope you are doing more piping now than before.

Yours aye,

James C. Begg

Piping Perfection

www.beggbagpipes.com

News

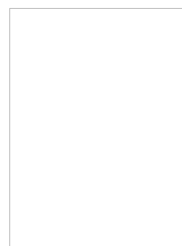
This nice email came in from Doreen Forney - many thanks to her and well done for all her musical efforts.

"I am in Vermont until I can get back to Scotland and my village of Leadhills. Every Thursday when it is 8 p.m. (20:00...I'm fluent in two time systems) I go out here on my porch and play Scotland the Brave, and then just look out at the mountains and say, "God bless the NHS." I play here in the States with the Berkshire Highlanders Pipe Band from Pittsfield, MA. When I am in Leadhills I play the cornet with the village's silver band and this past week we played Somewhere Over the Rainbow, wherever we were. I came inside and put down my pipes and picked up the cornet for that tune. I'm with you all in spirit. Stay safe and we will all meet up again one day.

I've been into your shop in Glasgow a few times but not to your new location. I've been going to Scotland since 1989 and finally bought a place in Leadhills about seven years ago and try to spend as much time there as possible, it is 'home'.

I sure hope you keep well and that your business will continue to thrive when this is all over.

All my best to you. Doreen."

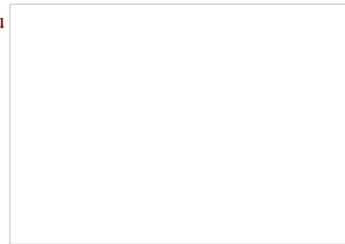


Callum Dewar, Company Captain of the excellent 1st Lenzie Boys Brigade, has sent some photos of their members who have been participating in the Clap for Keyworkers and the VE Day Piping of the 'Battles O'er' on 8th May. James and Bill Begg are both ex-BB and both learned the pipes with the 167th Glasgow Company - so we are glad that the BB in Lenzie (near to Begg Bagpipes in Kirkintilloch) is alive and thriving.



Special Offer

Revamp your cords - when was the last time you even looked or thought about them? Apparently, they just hold your drones together and stop the pipes falling off your shoulder - WRONG. If you get the correct setting, not only will your bag sit better and be happier but you will be too. On top of this, you'll now look a bobby dazzler and catch the judge's eye. He'll not notice you've played a grace note instead of an e. He may not even notice you've played a crunlauth-a-mach when it is not appropriate. His comment will be: "you played well and I have you in first place - but where did you get these fantastic cords? !!!!" Here's [the deal](#) - cords only £15 plus free post UK, £5 post to the EU and £10 post to the rest of the world. Available in silk - red /black /bottle green/ burgundy/ white /royal stewart Available in wool - white / burgundy



Fill your boots up!

Field Report 1 - from within the mysterious depths of James Begg's head.

As I sat around in lockdown, I began to think.....

And this thought occurred to me - what do pipers do to keep their interest and motivation as they get older? I've been playing every Thursday for the NHS clap in the street and been playing all the populous old favourites which go down very well. However, even at this level and due to my "lower than it used to be" amount of playing, I still have to concentrate a little to put on a good show. It's amazing how even basic tunes can occasionally disappear into the ether of your brain. I quite enjoy the toe tapping stuff that normally you wouldn't play and it's great to see how much enjoyment people get. Beyond this, I rather hope it lets people enjoy the music and appreciate a good, albeit easy tune in their own backyard. I think I have warmed and cheered my neighbours up as well as showing support for the medical and care staffs. However, how do you retain your enthusiasm and motivation to practice if you're playing solely for your own pleasure? Why practice the same old tunes when you know within your heart of hearts that they are not going to get better after 40 years of trying to achieve that elusive perfection? What actually happens is you whack through tunes and get disillusioned as you know you played it better when you played every day and all day - do you (older readers) remember these times? The interest for me came from actually learning a tune and more so than the actual playing once I had it firmly under my belt. So all the lovely marches were great but once learned it was usually straight onto the next one. Piobaireachd kept my interest going but if you're not playing all that often, it's even harder to retain the tunes by memory. I am in no doubt that if I played every day it would all come back and as I write these words the following immediately springs to mind viz. "I'll practice tomorrow" but as we all know, it never quite happens like that.

What's the best way forward? Do you compose or judge or join a band? That maybe falls into the category of "been there, seen it, done it, got the t shirt. "

Teaching perhaps may be a solution – it would be good for the innermost psyche to be imparting knowledge and investing in the future of piping.

Some might say that just playing a well known easy tune would give pleasure. Scotland the Brave may not be as easy as it first appears although it is regarded as such by some but you would be inclined to disagree when you can often hear a poor rendition – in these circumstances, it is painful to say the least when they ruin such a soul stirring tune.

I hear you say that you should learn more tunes but what is the point when you've got thousands in the bank with many lying at the bottom of the vault and almost completely forgotten.

On the flip side of the coin on a positive note, there are a lot of players who could not devote sufficient time to piping due to commitments with careers and young families. On retirement, they then launch into a new life piping and reap great rewards and pleasure – brilliant.

So in conclusion, let us be content with past glories. Do you remember the trip to Cowal with a little lubrication pre bus and plenty apres bus and the chat in the beer tent? Perhaps these days were more enjoyable than the hurly burly, disciplined approach in the top echelons today but hey – the standards of today are absolutely stunning and the bar is now set so high by the likes of the Field Marshall, Roddy MacLeod, Stuart Liddell and Simon Fraser to name but a few. Does anyone of a more mature disposition now fancy the long trip to the games, the wet weather, the midges et al? Yep - perhaps it's a younger man's game.

Field Report 2 - reports of a suspicious looking person

Does anyone recognise this person? He has been seen lurking around Begg Bagpipes premises in Kirkintilloch. He looks a bit dodgy and could well be a hobo. If spotted, it may not be a good idea to approach him even if your pipes are in need of maintenance or a new bag.

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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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