

Welcome to Begg Bagpipes

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

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Newsletter - March

Dear Customer,

Welcome to March's newsletter. We are now into the second year of this publication and I hope you find it informative, interesting and innovative.

The hot topic recently was the potential disbandment of the Strathclyde Police Pipe Band. I have had the pleasure of supplying this Band for nearly 30 years and in addition to being good and loyal customers, they have been outstanding ambassadors for the Strathclyde Region and for Scottish Culture and Heritage as a whole. Everyone these days is always looking for improved efficiency and better use of resources, but when the news broke that the new management of Strathclyde Police were considering the demise of the Band, the public outcry was so vociferous that second thoughts were brought to bear - status quo is the official line for the moment but we need to monitor developments closely. The professionalism of the Band reflects very well on the professionalism of the Police as a whole - perhaps some people at HQ need to get a bit closer to the psyche of the Scots on this matter.

The other hot potato was the rather strange decision to ban International judges from judging the 5 main pipe band events this year. Again, irrespective of the rights or wrongs, it seems to be another example of mis-management by the RSPBA in allowing the situation to get out of control. The RSPBA should be congratulated for the efforts they put into organising the competitions but perhaps this is another example of poor decision making. We owe a great deal of thanks and gratitude to so called "International" bands and individuals for their outstanding contribution to the development of piping and drumming across the globe and to exclude them from anything but a full and active role in any aspect of piping and drumming is nothing short of disgraceful. The RSPBA may have been within their rights in terms of enforcing the rules on a minor technicality, but they are missing the bigger and much more important issue - the harmonious promotion and development of piping and drumming globally.

Yours Aye,

James C Begg

News

The outstanding St Laurence O'Toole Pipe Band (on the right) will be performing in Armagh on 21st March 2009 in Armagh City Hotel.

Tickets are priced at £13.00 and include a complimentary souvenir programme from the event.

Check out their website for more details - www.slotpb.com



The annual Uist and Barra solo piping competition will be held on Saturday 14th March 2009 at the College of Piping in Otago Street, Glasgow. Please note the change of venue from the Piping Centre.

Begg Bagpipes are pleased to be associated with both of these events.

As mentioned last month, I had the pleasure to be interviewed by the lovely Jill Daley from Insight Radio. Jill suffered blindness at the young age of 19 but this has not stopped her from enjoying life to the full. We had a great laugh and Jill giggled with excitement as she tried the pipes out and we did get a tune from her on the practice chanter. Jill does the daily Daley lunchtime show and tries to do almost anything -skydiving, football etc -I think the pipes were more of a challenge than she thought but I sent her a kit so she can practice and remember her visit.

Also spoke with Greg Allen from Raigmore Hospital radio show in Inverness. This was a slightly more in-depth programme and it was nice to see Greg in the shop. He was in Glasgow to take part in the Celtic Connections Event and so if you were a patient in Raigmore Hospital at the time of the broadcast, I hope my contribution to Greg's show made your stay a bit more bearable.

Top Tip - Cords Part 2

Following on from last month's newsletter, the tips below should prove useful when you are fitting cords.

1. Work from the outside tenor across to the bass.
2. Take one end and measure the tassel from the grove to the bottom of the ferrule. Secure across cord grove.

3. Take cord and measure to the bottom of the ferrule of the outside tenor. This is the distance to the middle tenor.
4. Secure round grove as before.
5. Take cord and measure to the middle of the middle tenor tuning pin. This is the distance for the bass. The bass gap is slightly longer distance-wise than the tenor gap.
6. Secure it to the slim part of the bass middle joint- no grove this time -just round the combing.
7. Create a smooth arc with the cord now as you attach the cord to the top bass joint.
8. Secure as before round the grove.
9. Tie a nice knot in the middle of the arc to let the tassel hang nicely. Don't have it too long as it looks poor - you can usually shorten the cord.
10. A final effect is to turn the middle tenor top 2 or 3 times to create a twist in the cord .

Another item which you may wish to consider is the ribbons, which can significantly enhance the appearance of your pipes. This is particularly good on formal occasions and we can supply ribbons in different tartans or colours at a cost of £39.

So there you have it - all you need to know about cords.

The Top Three Tunes - By Mr R. McShannon

1. Leaving Lunga.

The original composer of this 2/4 march is believed to have been Willie



Thomson who lived in Whitehouse in Kintyre. However, Willie sold the tune to John Gordon who is now credited as the composer. It was from Willie Thomson that I acquired the set of Center pipes I play today - these pipes were made by Center in the late 1800's before they (father and son) emigrated to Australia.

(Photo: a lovely view of Lunga and the Islands of the Inner Hebrides.)

2. Lochanside.

This is a very fine 3/4 march, with a beautiful natural melody composed by John MacLellan of Dunoon. No matter how often you hear this tune you never tire of it.

3. Lament for Donald of Laggan.

This is a very melodic tune and an excellent example of a really good piobaireachd. It is fairly short and suitable for those learning Ceol Mor, but in the hands of an experienced player it is a masterpiece.

Ronnie McShannon

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

Special Offer



10% off all Pipe Dreams products this month.

Pipe Dreams is run by partners Ronnie McShannon, as featured in the Top Three Tunes, and the drummer Tommy Johnstone. They were friends in the Scottish Power and British Caledonian Pipe Bands and travelled the world with B Cal. They subsequently turned their hobby into a very successful reed making company and are now well known in particular for their drone reeds. To quote from their website:

"Ezeedrone Bagpipe Drone Reeds were introduced just over ten years ago and have quite simply taken the piping world by storm. In terms of competition successes, there is hardly a prize in the solo piping or pipe band competition scene which has not been won by pipers playing Ezeedrone reeds - in most cases the major prizes have been won multiple times with these reeds!"

They also now supply pipe reeds in cane low resistance, medium resistance and hard. You can also get their small pipe drone and chanter reeds through Begg Bagpipes.

You are always guaranteed a quality product time and time again from Pipe Dreams and that is why Begg Bagpipes is pleased to stock their products and to be associated with them.

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Thanks

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