

# Welcome to Begg Bagpipes

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

click on the banner to go to Begg Bagpipes home page

---



Piping on the web<sup>®</sup>

## Newsletter - May

Dear Customer,

So we are nearly off and running for the piping season again and it seems no time at all since last year when I was winding my way down to sunny Gourock and then a week later to the first major championship at Dumbarton - this year they are on Sunday 10th May and Saturday 16th May respectively. To celebrate the new season, we have a number of special offers this month including some of the items that will see you through the events and ensure that your pipes are in tip-top condition - see below.

So good luck to all our customers in all competitions. Please let us know of anything which you would like to publicise for your band or anything that you come across that would be of interest to other readers.

Yours Aye,

James C Begg

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

---

## News

Robert Thomson, from the Robert Wiseman Vale of Atholl Pipe Band, has kindly informed me that the Band are performing



in Orkney as part of the folk festival there. The venue is the Pickaquoy Centre in Kirkwall on the 23rd of May 2009 and there will be a street parade during the day and concert at night. "The Vale" is one of the premier pipe bands in the world, with a reputation for high octane performance of new, sometimes radical and innovative music. Brought into Grade One by Pipe Major Ian Duncan, "The Vale" constantly push the boundaries of pipe band performance, examples of which can be heard on their classic albums "Both Sides of the Tracks", "No Reservations", "Live n' Well" and "Live from Frankfurt".

This month saw an unusual request for a sheep skin - to be used in making a replica of a 17th century covenanters' mask. It has been commissioned for

display in Ayrshire where the covenanter allegedly wore it. It is one of the ugliest things I've seen in a long time but seems to have high historical value - I'll see if I can get a photo of the finished article.

Fancy a Week in Paradise Bagpipe School? Well a good customer, Ian Whitelaw from California, has sent me a link of a School that he and Murray Henderson are running from the 6th to the 13th of July - it looks fantastic and a very reasonable charge indeed to be taught by two such icons of piping. Go on and treat yourself - click on the link below.

[A Week in Paradise Bagpipe School](#)

---

### **Top Tip - Music to the Ears**

Are the so called "very easy" tunes that we all learned as beginners simply easy or do they in reality pose more of a challenge? We generally tend to view tunes like Scotland the Brave, Scots Wha Hae, the Brown Haired Maiden, the Earl of Mansfield, Shoals of Herring and many more as being simple and easy to play. This stems from the fact that the melody in each case is very tuneful and so it automatically sounds quite good no matter how we interpret it . What we need to do is point these tunes hard ( i.e. emphasise the theme notes -hold for as long as possible and shorten the cut notes but don't chop them) and get the full swing and thrust from them. As we learned these tunes in the first few years of our piping careers, most of us did not have the experience to get the full impact of them across. It is all too easy to think "this tune is so easy and I can play it no bother" that you don't give the musical interpretation the focus it deserves and you fail to deliver the full musical and melodic impact of strong tunes such as Scotland the Brave. My point may be seen in the massed bands set up at football games etc, where everyone plays the standard basic repertoire of Green Hills, Highland Laddie and so on. On the surface, the tunes come across to the general public in an acceptable manner because they are so well known, but in fact, the reality is often that such massed bands are a complete shambles from a musical point of view. So why not take the time to go back and rediscover the melodic thrust and beauty of what we may consider as basic, easy tunes. The notes may be easy enough, but concentrate on your artistic and musical interpretation - you may be pleasantly surprised with the outcome.

---

## The Top Three Tunes - by Herr Martin Reinle

**1. David Derek Thomson Woodrow** - a 2/4 March composed by James Maclean, ex-Strathclyde Police. This is available from the book by Ronald Maclean entitled Cruinneachadh Ceol Pioba Chulodair or in English The Culloden Collection of Bagpipe Music. Many of the tunes in the book are from the Isle of Barra and South Uist, and like me, the composer was taught piping by the late Fred Morrison.



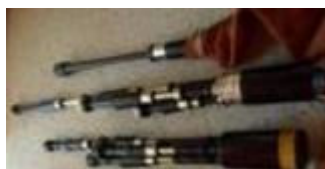
**2. Biddy from Sligo** - a traditional jig and seldom heard these days. The third and fourth parts were composed by the late Pipe Major George. S MacLellan, Gordon Highlanders or G.S as he is affectionately known.

**3. An Daorach Bheag or The Wee Spree** - one of the first piobaireachds I learned from "Old Fred" and I'll never forget his way of teaching. Fred Morrison gave me many tunes, but the most important gift of all was a love of piping. What an outstanding character he was - Thank you Fred!

Martin Reinle, Speyer, Germany

---

Martin Reinle is a well known piper, bagpipe maker and piping enthusiast from the southern part of Germany. He is a very interesting man and I have known him since he studied piping in the early 1980s at the College of Piping in Glasgow. Martin spent quite a few years here studying with the late Fred Morrison senior and got a great grounding in piobaireachd and light music .He has competed on a few occasions and has achieved a high level of skill and a knowledge that is to be admired - such dedication to his craft is not often seen. When he is not flying the world as a crew member with Lufthansa, he is playing and making pipes. Some samples of his work are shown and if you would like to contact him, he is on [mreinle@t-online.de](mailto:mreinle@t-online.de)



Thanks Martin, for your top tunes selection. Watch out for other world class pipers making their selection in future issues, including those based outside of Scotland.

---

## Special Offer -

1. 15% off all makes of pipe chanter reeds.
2. 10% off waxed and unwaxed hemp.
3. 10% off seasoning.
4. The large discount of 20% on the College of Piping tutors is extended from last month.

These discounts apply to online purchases only.

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.

---



### Field Report - Art, Engineering and Piping

During a recent visit to the Concert Hall in Glasgow, I noticed an old metal sculpture by the famous Glasgow sculptor George Wylie, located in the Bon Auberge Hotel next door. It was commissioned by his friend who owned the hotel at that time and the reason it caught my attention was that I played for George in 1987 on an open top bus from Springburn Museum to the Finnieston Crane on Clydeside. He had created a memorable and poignant artwork, The Straw Locomotive, for the Finnieston Crane. Made from straw in the form of a full size locomotive, the sculpture processed slowly through

the streets to the sound of my pipes, then dangled from the crane for two weeks, twisting slowly in the wind, before being brought down and set ablaze, as a commemoration of Glasgow's once vital engineering industry.

Picture shows the Finnieston Crane in all its glory. Its principal purpose was to load heavy locomotives for export. Another of George's Sculptures is the clock with legs outside the concert hall - check it out if you are attending the Simon Fraser University Pipe Band concert on August the 12th (current world champions and all of course playing Begg Bags).

---

## 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)