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-----Piping Perfection-----
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[November Newsletter](#)

Dear Piping Enthusiast,

Now is the time to refresh, to take stock and to gird your loins for piping withdrawal after a busy season. The best remedy is a good tune blowing hot into the bag (a Begg bag of course) and marching to the strains of a good 2/4 march. It's a wonderful genre especially the competition 2/4s but perhaps the lesser 2 part 2/4s are just as lively. I wonder why we have such a plethora of 2/4 marches like Brigadier Cheape, Southall, Hugh Kennedy and so on when strathspeys especially and reels seem to be less abundant. Are strathspeys harder to compose? It may suggest so. You would imagine with the amount of highland dancers there are these days that new strathspeys would be well to the fore but maybe they just use the same tunes to dance to - a bit like the pipe bands playing the same old chestnuts that apparently suit drummers and meet the complexity requirement for judges. This position fortunately has recently been changing. Was it Coskelt playing David Ross of Rosehall as well as Canterbury and Glasgow Police? And did I hear The Power with Kantara to El Arish and 93rd Highlanders Farewell to Edinburgh? There's a military feel here which is fine and good for them to think outside the box.

If any of our extensive reader/customer base have any tunes that you have composed, we could look at publishing them in future newsletters. Please feel free to send any you might have under your pillow or in the cupboard that need airing – we are not in the same league as say the Scots Guards book, but it might be your big chance of a composition breakthrough.

Yours aye,
James C. Begg
Piping Perfection

www.beggbagpipes.com

News.

It was good to see Finlay Johnston winning the Glenfiddich - the unofficial solo piping world championship – and he is the crème de la crème for a second consecutive year. Finlay is a long term customer and uses a small sheepskin bag. It was also a fantastic result for Connor

Sinclair to achieve 2nd overall at his first and definitely not his last appearance at Blair Castle. He uses a standard sheepskin bag and appears in my adverts for the current year. These champion soloists on Begg bags add to our earlier band successes with Inveraray and many others.

I note the refurbishment of the RSPBA head quarters are coming to a finish after the fire a few years ago. That's good to see but it seems to have taken a long time. I wonder if they might have acquired something a bit more updated/modern or indeed taken up residence in a large building which generally was under utilised. I trust money remains for full time tuition in the various rooms that are now shortly going to come into play and time will tell. But hey – never mind fancy new premises – what about doing something regarding the shockingly low prize money at competitions? It really is a disgrace with every band having to more or less fully fund their appearances at comps.

Special Offer

- a real beauté just in time for Xmas

A JCB 3 spec Begg bagpipe at the price of the standard JCB 1 less a further massive 10% discount. So an excellent spec and a discount to our newsletter customers just in time for Xmas. African blackwood with ancient flat combing and nickel ferrules, imitation ivory tops and wooden projecting mounts.

All made by hand throughout. Pipes supplied with plastic reeds, no maintenance hide bag and set-up ready to play - pipes, bag and set-up all by Begg Bagpipes.

Varnished or hand waxed finish in stock.

So for the EU that's a brilliant £765 (incl VAT) and for outside the EU £637.50 - a saving on both counts of some 17%.

Postage to be added at cost.

Email James on james@beggbagpipes.com if Santa is coming your way!



Field Report 1 - From Asia

As previously mentioned, my son Gavin had the brilliant opportunity to take up an internship with CERS. [The China Exploration & Research Society](http://www.chinaexploration.com) is the pre-eminent non-profit organization in exploration, research, conservation, nature, culture, and education in remote China and its adjacent areas. Under the guidance of CERS' dynamic Founder and President Wong How Man, Gavin spent time in Laos, Yunnan Province and Hong Kong assisting CERS in their field work – and before you ask, Gavin didn't start the recent riots in HK!

In addition to working with leading edge technology on his expeditions, How Man is also a great enthusiast for all things traditional, including the Great Highland Bagpipe. On behalf of Gavin and as a thank you, I presented How Man with a set of JCB1 pipes with an inscription on a shield. How Man also has a practice chanter, tutor book and CD and we hope he can find the time in his busy schedule to learn a few tunes. If not, he no doubt will include his Begg bagpipes somewhere in one of the CERS' museums. It was a once in a lifetime experience for Gavin and so another big thanks to How Man. (Pic: Bill Begg presenting the pipes to How Man in Chinatown, London.)



James Begg

Field Report 2 - from Asia

In case you are wondering about the Begg Chinese connection, Bill lived and worked in China for a while with Land Rover. As you will see if you click through to [CERS](#), Land Rover is the vehicle of choice for How Man's serious expeditions on the Tibetan Plateau at very high altitude. On one visit to How Man's expedition got his pipes and fiddle out as you



HQ in [Zhongdian/Shangri-la](#), Bill can see in these pics.

Obituary

I was really sad to hear of the death of P/M Robert Shepherd MBE.

Bob was an ambassador, educator, entrepreneur and an exuberant, charismatic player and judge. He was also a genuine family man as you can see from how he employed all members of his family in his hugely successful bagpipe company. His reason for being in business and running a band was to stimulate the economy in Fife for his family



which after the pits closed was a barren area job-wise to say the least. I suspect he also dealt with the students at Ballingry School in a family way, shaping and guiding them to the top of the world and outdoing some of the legendary bands of the mid to late 70s.

I knew Bob over many years and whilst not always speaking with him directly when ordering items from his company, he always seemed to be aware of what I was buying. I dealt more with Janet and Eugene and the service which Bob orchestrated was second to none.

He was always a large than life character, loved B52s and had a tune composed by Eric Rigler I believe in his honour - a great tune for a great man. He kindly agreed to give me an interview for our newsletter some years back and I always remember he had a great fondness for that amazing Dutch violinist and conductor Andre Rieu. When I asked what type of music was his first love, and expecting him to say piping, he said emphatically it was Andre! Not sure if it was tongue in cheek but I had a laugh. [Click here](#) for Bob's interview from March 2013.

Our sympathies to his family and Bob's absence will leave big void. I hope the family will continue Bob's amazing legacy.

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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