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## [Newsletter](#)

Dear Piping Enthusiast,

We are delighted to bring you an excellent Field Report, written and presented by Piper (Pte) Tarik El-Yabani, Band & Corps of Drums | The Royal Gibraltar Regiment. The Rock has always had a special place in the hearts of anyone associated with Britain and the Commonwealth and it's great to hear that Piping is still going strong. By the sounds of Tarik's ambitions, Piping has a great future and we thank him for his report - we wish Tarik and pipers and drummers on the Rock all the very best for the future.



Yours aye,

James C. Begg

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## Piping on the Rock

My name is Tarik El-Yabani and I'm a musician and piper in the Royal Gibraltar Regiment. I have been piping for 12 years. Antecedent British regiments from all 4 corners of the United Kingdom toured the Rock of Gibraltar over the centuries since Britain took Gibraltar from Spain in 1704, with Spain signing it away "in perpetuity" to the British Crown in the Treaty of Utrecht, 1714. For more than 300 years (longer than the United States of America has existed as an independent nation), this tiny outcrop at the bottom of Spain and of Europe has been fiercely British; Gibraltarians voted twice (1967 and 2002) on transferring and/or sharing sovereignty with Spain in referenda – on both occasions the result was a 99% "NO."



With such a devotion to Britain and with a strong and unique British identity (Gibraltarians being multi-cultural and bilingual, mixing English and Spanish and with our own distinct dialect), it was only natural that piping and highland drumming would develop in this British Overseas Territory.

The Scots and Irish brought with them their Pipes & Drums and inevitably began teaching "the locals."

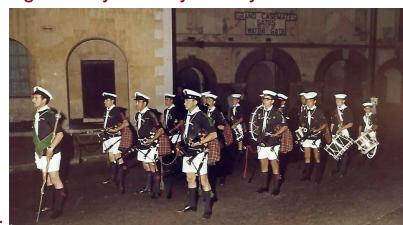
The earliest record I have been able to find is this image of the Dockyard Police Pipes & Drums.

Although no official records have been found (yet!), it is thought that they were instructed by a battalion of the Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) in the late 1800s.



Unfortunately, this band enjoyed a very short life. Nevertheless, it is believed that these musicians later started another band, this time of the 5<sup>th</sup> Gibraltar Sea Scouts (RN 101) – the only Sea Scouts group outside of the UK mainland recognised by the Royal Navy.

The Gibraltar Sea Scouts Pipe Band survives to this day, now more than a century old. With the group being formed in 1914, they have been instructed by (and played with) visiting military pipes and drums, with the most noticeable being the Royal Irish Rangers. Pipe Major Albert Price is a household name within the band as he instructed PMaj Galliano.



There is also an award named after him.

The St. John's Ambulance Brigade locally also had a pipe band, which adopted the Royal Stewart tartan. Although initially wearing a variation of the St. John's Ambulance general uniform, they later acquired and adopted Scots Guards regalia. It was formed by musicians from other bands and was led by Pipe Major Trevor Guillianio. Unfortunately, it disbanded.



I joined the Sea Scouts as a young teenager and grew up there. As a child I had always been musical; my earliest memory is of being the drummer boy (the irony!) during a Christmas nativity play in pre-school, later developing a passion for the piano. However, at 16 years of age, I decided I wanted to do something a bit more challenging and unique, so one day Tony Galliano had a spotty teenager of Moroccan heritage turning up asking to learn the pipes. "Oh God" was probably his first thought. I picked them up with relative ease and developed a passion (read: obsession) for piping over the years. I was lucky enough to make Pipe Sergeant, too.

Today, I'm a versatile musician and reservist with the Royal

Gibraltar Regiment. With the RG, I have travelled and performed in different locations in the UK, including Edinburgh Castle, and overseas in Morocco. I have been fortunate in enjoying the support of the regiment's chain of command, who enrolled me in the



*Army School of Bagpipe Music and Highland Drumming*. As the first Gibraltarian and member of the RG to be enrolled at ASBM&HD, I completed a condensed Class 3 (Beginner) Course and fast-tracked on the Class 2 (Intermediate) Piper's Course last year, securing a recommendation for the Class 1 (Senior) Piper's Course completed last month and proudly securing a recommendation to attend the next All Arms Pipe Major's Course, all under the watchful eye of Pipe Major (WO1) Peter MacGregor (4 SCOTS – The Highlanders), Senior Pipe Major of the British Army.

As the Royal Gibraltar Regiment continues to develop piping within the regiment, we are in the process of acquiring military highland dress and will adopt the Thomson Grey tartan kilt, in remembrance of the RG's first local Commanding Officer, Sir Willie Thomson, and which coincidentally features the regimental colours of scarlet and grey.



Our most recent performance was for the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE Day, where we collaborated with the Sea Scouts. RG buglers sounded Last Post from Rock Gun, the highest point of the Rock of Gibraltar. Sea Scout and RG pipers played "When the Battle's O'er" and "VE 75" at different points around the Rock, culminating in a socially distanced public display on the steps of St. Bernard's Hospital in commemoration of VE Day and in tribute to our outstanding health workers during the Coronavirus pandemic.



I aspire to contribute to the further development of piping on the Rock, both in the regiment and the Scouts and take it to the next level upon successful completion of my Pipe Major's course.

The Band & Corps of Drums of the Royal Gibraltar Regiment and The Gibraltar Sea Scouts Pipe Band are on Facebook and Twitter if you wish to follow my piping journey and the development of piping on the Rock.

*Tarik plays a set of 1950s Sinclair/MacPherson and 2017 Duncan MacRae bagpipes tied into Begg sheepskin bags.*

Thank you Tarik and the original report with larger photos can be downloaded by [clicking here.](#)

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Special Offer

With Tarik mentioning the lovely pipes he plays, we also have a small number of sets available on a special deal. A JCB3 spec Begg bagpipe at the price of the standard JCB 1 less a further massive 10% discount. So an excellent spec and a great discount to our newsletter customers. 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](mailto:james@beggbagpipes.com)

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## YouReport

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