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Hi Friend,

You may recall, last month saw me travel to California where I judged at The



Queen Mary Highland Gathering at Long Beach, California. It was great to catch up with so many friends and the good weather helped to make it a most pleasant weekend. I then stayed with my friend, Aaron Shaw of Wicked Tinkers folk band fame for a few very enjoyable days. Next, up the I-99 to Turlock where I conducted a workshop with a few of the Rob McLintock School regular students. I then carried on to Los Gatos where we had another very successful workshop with Wes Weber and the next day with the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Pipe Band. I would like to thank everyone who helped or attended for their support and kindness. Especially Sue and Burr Nissen who hosted me and the workshop in Los Gatos. Their house always seems to be open to pipers where you always receive a warm smile and something to eat. Looking forward, I will be teaching at the [Inveraray Piping Workshop](#) next month. The details for it and other schools I am teaching at are below.

I've been overwhelmed with orders since returning home last week so I have been very busy catching up with them. Although still a bit jet lagged, I went to the second semi-final heat of the Scottish Pipers' Association's Knockout for the Piping Times Trophy. Stuart Liddell and Callum Beaumont played. As expected, the standard of piping was exceptionally high and I was glad I didn't have to adjudicate. At this event, the audience chooses their preference. It must have been close. As it turned out, Callum has gone through to the final on May 2.

The next day I attended the 'Uist & Barra' competition. Unfortunately, I couldn't stay to listen to the whole competition. It's amazing when listening to these top players just how different the sound of their bagpipes are. The difference between the balance of chanter to drone, volume, but most interestingly, the harmonics produced from each



instrument. There were some instruments that did not have the clarity on their minor scale (low G, B, D, and F) compared to the major scale (A, C, E and high A). The drones, in particular the bass drone, give all the harmonics of the chanter notes. If the harmonics are not spot on in the drones, it will result in some distortion, particularly with the minor scale notes. A number of synthetic reeds can do this. As Pipe Major Willie Ross (pictured) was quoted when asked how the bagpipe functions: "The drones act as amplifiers to the chanter." This means that the pipe chanter notes should harmonise with the drone harmonics which will then give you projection of the chanter notes.

As ever, feel free to contact me with any aspects of my products. Email me at

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Enjoy your piping,

Bruce Hitchings MBE BEM.

● **April 17-19:** Along with Stuart Liddell, Alasdair Henderson and Murray Henderson, I will be teaching at the Inveraray Piping Workshop. This is for pipers at all levels (2019 group photo below).

● **June 19-26:** I am a long-term instructor at the Rob McLintock California School of Piping and Drumming, in San Diego, California. This is a highly respected piping and drumming school run formerly by the College of Piping.

● **July 10-17:** The following week, I head to Arizona where I teach at the Jim Thomson Piping and Drumming School in Flagstaff.



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