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Tasmania Police Pipe Band  
GPO Box 308C  
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## TASMANIA POLICE PIPE BAND

### GENERAL INFORMATION FOR LEARNER PIPERS & DRUMMERS

#### INTRODUCTION:

The majority of this document relates to learner pipers, but many of the same conditions relate to drummers in relation to commitment, training, tuition and instruments.

#### BAGPIPES

The Great Highland Bagpipe as played by the Band is an ancient instrument, which has evolved only marginally since the earliest recorded history of its use. Although generally recognised as a traditional Scottish instrument, the pipes are also played in various forms in Ireland, throughout Europe and in some parts of the Middle East.

#### THE BAND

The Tasmania Police Pipe Band was formed in 1969 and wears the Fletcher of Dunans tartan. It is a voluntary organisation comprised mainly of civilian musicians. Notable performances include four seasons at the Edinburgh Military Tattoo, highland gatherings in Hawaii and Jakarta, the final Beating Retreat ceremony for the Royal Hong Kong Police and attendance at numerous Tattoos and competitions throughout mainland Australia and New Zealand. The Band regularly performs at variety shows, civic functions and charitable events. We are a working Band!

#### TRAINING/TUITION OUTLINE

Your initial status with the Band will be that of learner piper.

The bagpipe is a challenging instrument to learn and master however once you are playing competently there is no other instrument quite as distinctive. Learning the pipes takes a lot of commitment from day one. To this end, you must set aside at least 15 to 20 minutes every day for practice. Regular practice is essential. Frequent short practices are the only way to progress at a reasonable pace.

There will be regular assessment of your progress by both your tutor and the Pipe Major. This is an important aspect of your tuition and will be discussed in detail with you.

#### PRACTICE NIGHTS

For Pipers learner tuition is on Mondays between 4-7pm and is held at the Police Citizens Youth Club in Liverpool Street West Hobart. It may be possible to make alternative arrangements with your tutor if necessary.

For drummers tuition will normally be 6 – 7pm on Tuesdays at Police Headquarters, initially. Alternative arrangements may be made with the Drum Sergeant.

## **EQUIPMENT/INSTRUMENTS**

Pipers will be responsible for the purchase of your own practice chanter. Your tutor will give you some guidance on what to buy. Practice chanters cost approximately \$100. The Band use Lyons Bagpipes and Highland Supplies in Melbourne for much of its equipment.

Drummers will be expected to purchase their own practice sticks (about \$30) and to practise at home on a drum pad. The band has pads available at \$60 if required.

## **TIMETABLE**

### Start – 6 months

At your first practice night, you will be issued with a Band music book. The tutor will explain the rudimentary applications of pipe music, how to hold the chanter and how to blow into the chanter to make musical sounds. You will then be taught how to play the scale and be shown some fingering exercises.

Tuition night is for the tutor to teach you essential skills. To become competent in these skills you must practise regularly in your own time. As mentioned earlier 15 to 20 minutes per day is the minimum practice you must commit to.

With regular practice at home it should take about 6 months to learn the basic playing skills and a few tunes from the Band's repertoire.

At the end of 6 months the Pipe Major will conduct an assessment of your progress. The assessment is to ascertain your ability to progress further in piping or where appropriate identify any remedial work required.

### 6 – 12 months

Once you progress past the first six months, you will be introduced to the bagpipes. You will be shown how to assemble, hold, tune and play them. Progressively you will be taught how to look after them and carry out important maintenance. A senior piper will be allocated to you to assist with this. For you to play in a pipe band you need to be able to perform drill movements while playing with the rest of the band. During this period you will be introduced to basic drill.

Please **NOTE**, for parents and partners during this phase of learning, learner pipers can make some very unmusical noises. It is important that they practise away from the rest of the household in a room, shed or garage. Don't worry though, the noise will progressively develop into wonderful music!

The next assessment of your progress will occur at the end of this period.

### 12 – 18 Months

You should now be ready to take your place at band practice with the rest of the band. Here is where you get the opportunity play your first tunes with the band. Band practice is held on Tuesday evenings from 6 until 9pm in the Band rooms. Depending on your progress and enthusiasm, you should be able to parade publicly with the Band about 18 months after you first start learning.

Once you have demonstrated the required playing skills you will be issued with a band uniform which remains the property of the band. This is a significant event in any new piper's career. Uniforms are not issued frivolously and when you get yours, it shows you have made the first major move in becoming an accomplished musician.

The Pipe Major will evaluate your capability again at this stage to ascertain if you have the potential to play competition grade music, something most pipers strive to achieve.

### 24 Months

You are now a fully-fledged “bagpiper”! With diligent practice and a degree of enthusiasm, it is likely this time can be shortened considerably.

## **PIPE BAND DRUMMING**

There are three different types of drum.

### **1. Snare Drum**

This is the most challenging of the three, but that is not to say that the others are easy. ( For example, the bass drummer requires excellent time -keeping and this can be a difficult role for any one to fill). The snare involves mastering much intricate stick work which must be played in unison as a team.

### **2. Tenor Drum**

Tenor drummers traditionally spin the sticks, as well as play in time. They are entertaining to watch but for long periods this can be physically demanding.

### **3. Bass Drum**

This is the largest drum and is the metronome of the band. It can be physically demanding when played for long periods.

All the drums have a role to play and ideally each can complement the overall sound. The drums add dynamics and excitement. They can accent notes, which pipes cannot.

As with any instrument, regular practise is essential. 20 minutes a day is needed in the beginning. As with other instruments, extra practise and dedication will bring faster results.

### **Timetable (Snare Drum)**

The Drum Sergeant will advise you as to the sticks and practice pad you will need to purchase. Music theory will be taught in conjunction with learning to play, with some sheet music with exercises to practise. Ideally these should be kept in a display type folder which can be added to from time to time. Always bring your folder with you.

It will take about 12 months (average ) to be able to play some simple scores and to master most of the rudiments. Full mastery may take several more years, but you could be playing in the band in 18 to 24 months.

### **Tenor Drum / Bass Drum**

At this point in time, we are not needing learners as we have more players than we require. However, this situation could change and only in extreme circumstances would a prospective learner be turned away.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

- The Band is supported by the Department of Police and Emergency Management.
- The Band does not impose membership fees or require tuition fees. You will be required to sign for and take responsibility for any Band equipment issued to you.
- All maintenance and cleaning of equipment and instruments is your responsibility.
- Once you feel confident, you may wish to buy your own set of bagpipes. It is strongly recommended you discuss this with the Pipe Major before doing so. The Band does have several sets of bagpipes which may be loaned out depending on the individual's circumstances.

The Band is expected to perform state-wide which does entail some travel. Normally travel is arranged through the Department. Occasionally we need to car pool so you may be able to arrange transport with another Band member.

We do have a number of members in the north of the State, who travel regularly.

The Band often travels nationally and internationally to participate in tattoos and competitions. Although the fares and accommodation are the responsibility of the individual, the Band endeavours to subsidise significant trips. This is done through our fund-raising activities, in which you will be expected to participate.

Whilst in uniform you are a representative of the Tasmania Police and are required to comply with Departmental requirements with regard to your appearance and behaviour. The Drum Major and other NCOs will offer advice in this regard.

### **Are you still interested...? Any queries...?**

Contact one of the following people to commence your piping/drumming career.

- The Pipe Major is in charge of piping and is the Musical Director.
- The Drum Sergeant is in charge of Drumming.
- The Drum Major is in charge of Dress and Drill and discipline.

## **WELCOME TO THE TASMANIA POLICE PIPE BAND!**

Band Administrator	Inspector Wayne Moore	6230 2418
Pipe Major	Steve Percival	0408 315 985
Drum Sergeant	Terry Patterson	6249 2710
Drum Major	Tony Bidgood	0407 568 490
Pipe Sergeant	Brynne Tanton	0418 307 678 (Northern contact)
Tutor – Learner Pipes	Cath Campbell	6229 1252