

Ross Bagpipe Bags



www.rossbagpipereeds.com

PLEASE READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY BEFORE PROCEEDING WITH THE BAG ASSEMBLY, AS IMPROPER TREATMENT OF BAG OR PARTS MIGHT NEGATE THE 2 YEAR WARRANTY

Thankyou for purchasing the Ross Suede Pipe Bag, which represents a major re-development of Ross bagpipe bags. The advantages of the Ross Suede Pipe Bag are as follows:

1. Arguably the most comfortable pipe bag to play
2. Has the same "feel" and vibrance as a sheepskin bag, but without all the hassles
3. The combination of breathable bag and canister system offers the best moisture control system available for bagpipes
4. The bag is highly breathable, and much more hygienic than conventional skin bags
5. There is no cutting nor tying-in required, as the bag comes complete with stock holders already fitted, ready to secure to the stocks
6. The bag never requires seasoning, and can be picked up at any time for playing
7. Very flexible, easy sliding zipper, providing quick access to inside the bag
8. Reeds will last much longer, have greater stability and far less trouble due to the drastically reduced moisture contact
9. The bag can be used with or without the canister system, or parts of, dependent upon one's own preferences or needs, providing a very flexible and adaptable bagpipe bag system

The bag is extremely breathable, allowing moisture vapour to quickly transfer to the outside of the bag, yet still retains a high level of air-tightness. The purpose of the airtight zip is to enable access to the canister and hoses for the initial setting up, and also for regular changing of canisters when required. Also this conveniently enables the bag to be left open to allow the inside to dry after playing. The stocks are connected via the air-hoses to a canister filled with instant moisture absorbing granules, which ensures that the only way air can reach the reeds is via the canister, thereby allowing only dried air to reach the reeds, see FIGURE 1 on page 2.

FIGURE 1

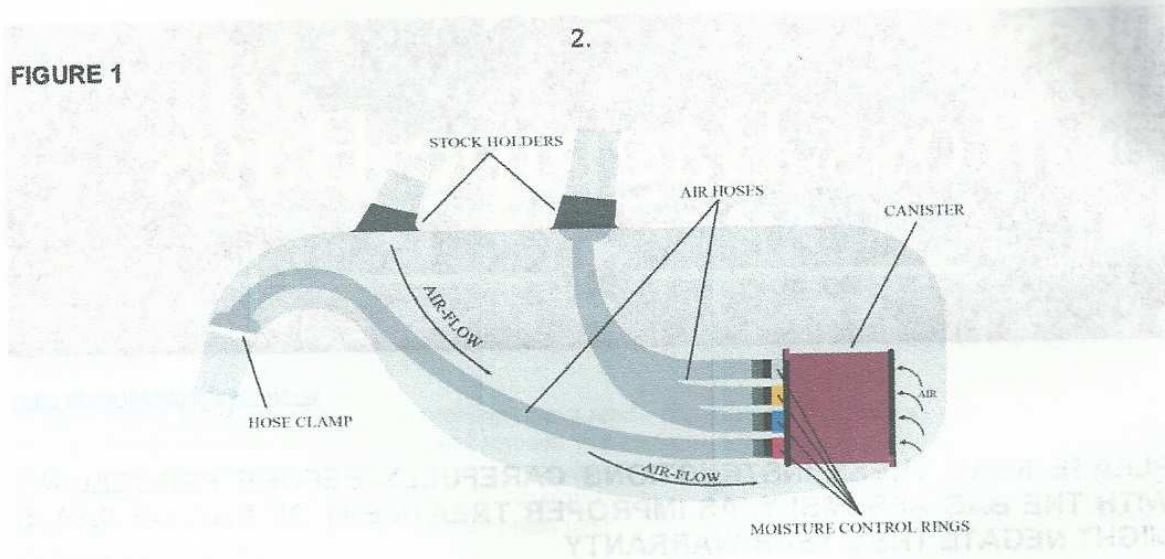
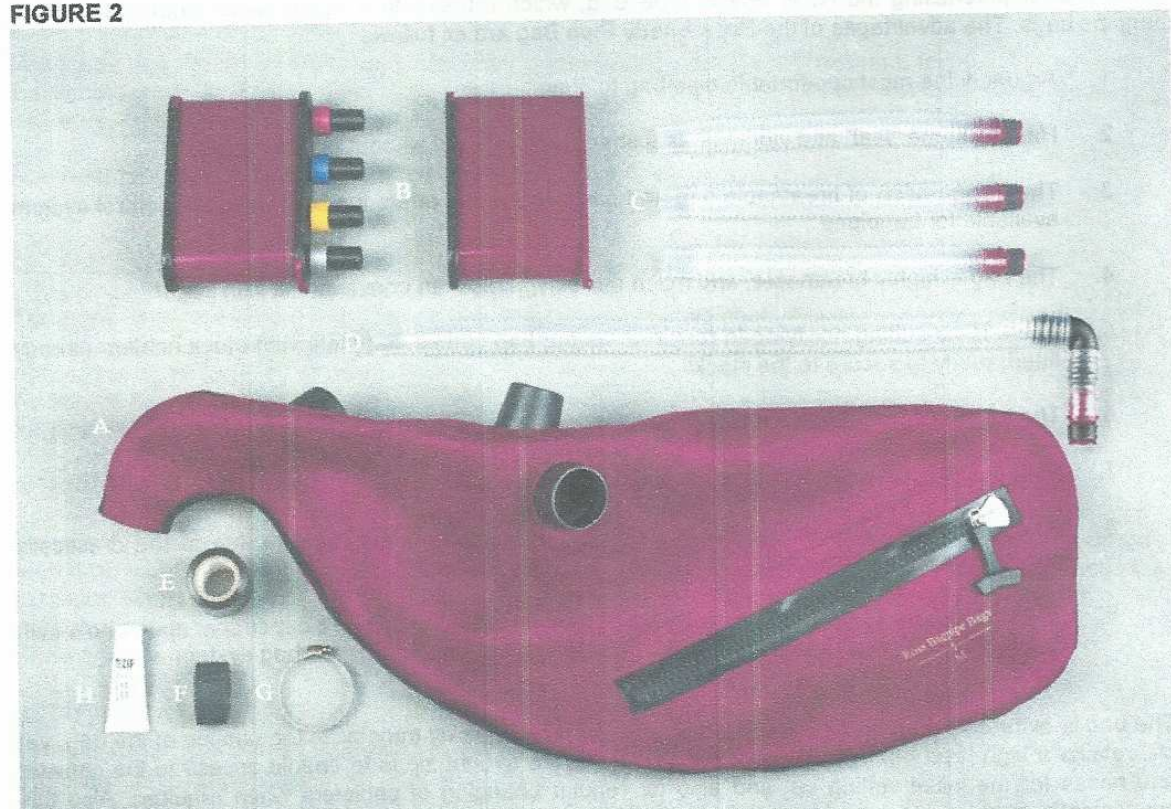


FIGURE 2



LIST OF SUPPLIED PARTS

- A 1 ROSS SUEDE PIPE BAG FITTED WITH STOCK HOLDERS & ZIP
- B 2 CANISTERS COMPLETE WITH GRANULES & AIR-FLOW RINGS
- C 3 AIR-HOSES FOR CONNECTION FROM DRONES STOCKS TO THE CANISTER
- D 1 CHANTER AIR-HOSE FOR CONNECTION FROM THE CHANTER STOCK TO THE CANISTER
- E 1 TAPE TO SEAL THE CONNECTIONS TO THE STOCKS
- F 1 RUBBER RING TO GO BENEATH THE CHANTER'S HOSE CLAMP
- G 1 HOSE CLAMP TO CLAMP THE CHNATER STOCK TO THE BAG
- H 1 TUBE OF SILICON LUBRICANT FOR THE ZIP

SETTING UP THE BAG

If not already done, the first step is to remove the stocks from your old bag, being careful to identify the relative stocks ie; bass, outside tenor, middle tenor etc., so as to put them into the same positions in the new bag. If they are unclear, then give them a thorough wash and dry.

Next you will need to connect the air-hoses to the drone stocks. Some pipers will want the chanter stock connected to the canister, and others will choose not to. This is totally up to personal preference, and will mostly be dictated by how wet a blower you are. Many pipers will prefer to use the long chanter air-hose connected to the blowpipe stock and not the chanter stock, so as the air is directed to the back of the bag and away from the chanter reed itself. This method does work particularly well, and allows for better chanter harmonics. If this is your option, then there is no point leaving the granules inside the chanter section of the canister. As already stated, the Ross Suede Pipe Bag offers a variety of set-up possibilities, and this is just one of these options.

The air-hoses are connected into the stocks by an expanding washer arrangement, already fitted to one end of each air-hose. This works by inserting the end of the hose into the stock (FIGURE 3), then gripping the section of the hose housing the connector and twisting it clockwise until the hose connector expands to become a firm, finger-tight fit within the stock (FIGURE 4). You might need to slightly angle the connector when twisting, which creates friction against the stock to start the expanding process. Although the hoses can be fitted into stocks already fitted into a bag, it is easier to assemble them prior to inserting the stocks into the bag, simply because you have a clear view of vision. To remove the hose, simply unwind the connector in an anti-clockwise direction.



FIGURE 3



FIGURE 4

Once the hoses are securely fixed onto the bottom of the stocks, you can insert the stocks into their relative positions either from inside the bag, or from the outside opening of each stock holder. You might need to use a smear of Vaseline to make this easier, depending upon the size of the stocks (FIGURE 5).

4.

If you have chosen to have the chanter stock connected to the canister, it is best to insert the chanter hose first. At this stage make any adjustments you feel necessary to the angling and height of each stock. With each stock holder there is a fair degree of angling possible to suit individual preference, but if you are unsure at this stage, keep the stocks straight until you try playing the bag, as you can go back and make any adjustments later on. Many pipers will find that the standard angling is already ideal for them.

Before securing the stocks with the accompanying tape, stretch one of the rubber sleeves provided over the outside of the bag at the chanter stock area where the clamp will be fitted (FIGURE 6), this is to help prevent the edges of the clamp from cutting into the bag material.



FIGURE 5



FIGURE 6

Then tighten the clamp quite firmly to ensure an airtight seal onto the chanter stock (FIGURE 7). The drones and blowpipe stocks are now held in place by taping over the join area of the stock and stock holder of the bag, as per FIGURE 8. To ensure a good seal, and a strong bond, you will need to stretch the tape as you wind it around the stock and stock holder, making sure you cover the tape fairly equally over the two parts. Two complete winds should be ample to make a good seal.

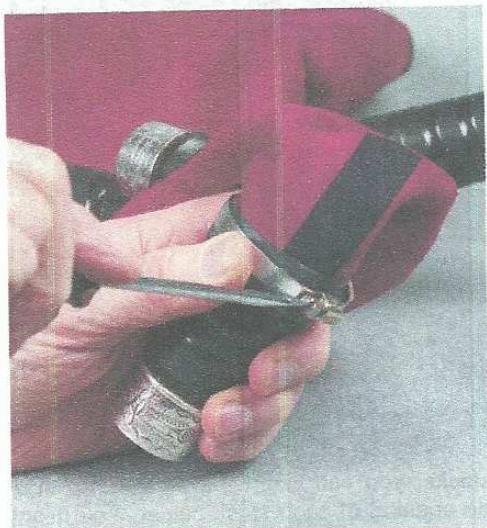


FIGURE 7



FIGURE 8

5.

Once all the stocks and air-hoses are in place, remove the canister with the bottom lid from the resealable plastic bag. There will almost certainly be some build-up of dust within the canister, due to much shaking during transportation from the time the granules were initially placed in the canisters up until this moment. So you will need to either blow out, or vacuum out the dust from each section of the canister. This is best done by sliding off the canister from the bottom lid (FIGURE 9), and then use a dry blower or vacuum cleaner applied to each section of the canister from both ends.



FIGURE 9

After the dust is blown out or vacuumed out, slide the bottom lid back onto the canister. It is now time to connect the hoses onto the bottom lid. Before doing so, we **STRONGLY** suggest you add a thin oil, like baby oil onto the 4 projecting tubes of the bottom lid prior to sliding the hoses on. The reason is that the hoses grab very strongly to the projecting tubes, and you won't be able to easily move them later on if you don't add oil at this stage. Even then, you might need to apply boiling water to remove them. Match up the colour coding of the airflow rings to connect the relative hoses as per below (FIGURE 10).



FIGURE 10

RED	CHANTER HOSE
BLUE	BASS HOSE
YELLOW	MIDDLE TENOR HOSE
GREY	OUTSIDE TENOR HOSE

IMPORTANT NOTE

At this point of assembly, ensure that when all hoses are connected, the canister lays flat on the bench when fitted, and remains exactly vertical when the bag is in the normal playing position. To check this, put the canister fully inside the bag, and then hold the bag up by the middle tenor stock. If done correctly, the canister will be vertical, without any leaning one way or another. In this position it will not be evident when playing. If the canister does have a lean, then twisting one or more of the hoses in the opposite direction to the lean can rectify this. Once set, this won't need to be done again, as the canister is easily slid off the bottom lid for canister exchange, or drying of the granules. Close the zip, and the bag is now setup.

WHEN TO DRY THE GRANULES IN THE CANISTER/S

The canister granules need to be exchanged or dried when there is any sign of moisture buildup inside the drones. This is tonally evident when unusual instability of drone sound becomes noticeable. How often this can or will occur is very dependent upon a few factors, like how wet a blower you are, how long you have been playing, and the climatic conditions of where you have been playing. So it is impossible for anyone to give you a precise frequency of when the granules need to be dried. The one thing you must remember is that the granules cannot keep absorbing an indefinite amount of moisture. It's a bit like trying to dry dishes with a wet tea towel, it just won't do the job! The granules must be dried periodically, and that is a fact. However, they can be reused over and over, absorb moisture, and be dried out indefinitely.

DRYING OUT THE DRYING GRANULES

Access the canister by unzipping the zip, then slide off the canister from the bottom lid. Remove the top lid by sliding it off, using your hand to apply top and side pressure as per FIGURE 11.



FIGURE 11

Empty the granules onto a plate or bowl that can withstand microwave cooking or oven heat, then place the granules into a Microwave oven for 5 minutes on high, or in a convection oven for around 15 minutes at 450F degrees or 230C degrees. **DO NOT PLACE THE CANISTER INSIDE THE OVEN.** Once dried, allow the granules to cool off in a fairly dry environment (or else they will absorb moisture from the air), and then pour them back into the canister by using a funnel or jug. Firmly replace the top lid, ensuring you have it the correct way around to match the slots.

Then blow/vacuum the dust out from BOTH ends of each section of the canister. If you continually fail to carry out this last step, then you will have dust particles accumulate inside your reeds, which will make them leak and cause problems. Finally, reconnect the canister back onto the bottom lid inside the bag, or back into one of the resealable plastic bags. Leaving a canister exposed to the air means the granules will absorb moisture from the air, and become much less effective when you go to use it when playing.

USING THE MOISTURE-FLOW RINGS FOR BAMBOO REEDS

Totally dry air causes problems for conventional bamboo reeds, as does too much moisture. So the Ross Canister Pipe Bag has a convenient solution to this problem. Located on the tubes on the bottom lid, there are 4 colour coded airflow rings that can rotate over holes in the tubes themselves (FIGURE 12 & FIGURE 13). The purpose is to be able to regulate the amount of moist air directly from inside the bag to go through to the reeds. How exposed the holes need to be, is totally dependent upon your particular setup, and how wet a blower you are. So it is a matter of trial and error to adjust the airflow to obtain the right amount of moisture content for your reeds.

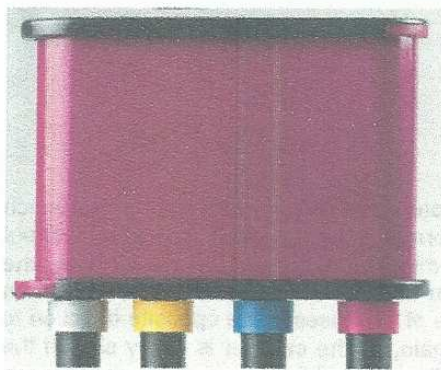


FIGURE 12

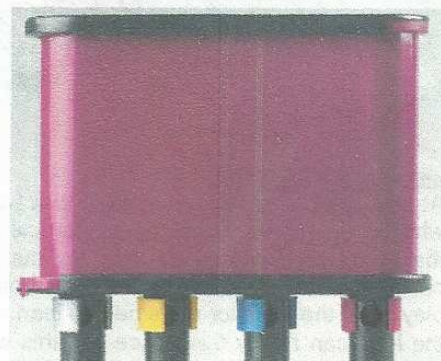


FIGURE 13

MORE INFORMATION ON MOISTURE CONTROL

The Ross Suede Pipe Bag uses a highly breathable material, which allows moisture vapour to pass through it quickly to the outside environment. This has a few benefits. It keeps the bag drier inside, aiding a certain degree of moisture control, but it also keeps the bag a lot more hygienic. Having a drier environment inside the bag will also boost a pipe bag's longevity.

Having a highly breathable pipe bag might be sufficient moisture control for some, particularly if combined with a hose type water-trap. Yet for many of us, this isn't going to prevent wet reeds, particularly in the midst of winter on those cold, damp days. This is when the Ross canister system can provide the best moisture control yet available. The granules we use are still the most effective method of instantly absorbing moisture vapour prior to air reaching the reeds. The granules can be used over and over again, being redried to again absorb and remove moisture from the air indefinitely. There is no other material that can do this so effectively over and over again. If this was not so, then we would be using an alternative material.

It might appear that the air flow will be severely restricted by having to pass through a canister full of drying granules, but it has almost no bearing upon blowing pressure at all. In fact the canister system can greatly reduce striking in problems by reducing the direct sudden charge of air onto the drone reeds.

For extra wet blowers, the use of a tube spit trap, is a very good idea. It will certainly limit saliva and enzymes from entering the bag itself, which greatly enhance hygiene levels. The tube also acts as another moisture control.

If pipers are not utilizing the chanter hose for drying the air going to the chanter reed, then there is little point in having granules in the chanter section of the canister (indicated by the red clip).

The reason behind having extra granules space in the bass drone section of the canister is that generally bass drone reeds take more air than tenor drone reeds. More air means the granules will get damp faster. So having more granules will extend the playing time to equal, or maybe even exceed the moisture free playing time of the tenors. Of course if you find that there is a marked discrepancy in your setup, and the bass drone is consistently drier than the tenors, then again it makes no sense carrying around more granules than necessary. In this case, simply reduce the granules until you attain a good consistent balance of playing time.

USING THE BAG IN HOT, DRY CLIMATES

The canister system can be ideally set-up for use in hot, dry conditions by simply wetting the granules inside the canister. This will ensure that reeds will receive moisture to function properly, and produce their optimum tone.

AIRTIGHTNESS EXPECTATIONS

Despite the claims, no bagpipe bag is absolutely airtight, ie. does not lose air whatsoever. If that were the case, one could inflate a pipe bag and come back a year later and it would still be just as tight as when you left it. All pipe bags leak in some way. Joints, and even the stocks themselves can have minute leaks, but mostly have no noticeable affect. What a piper should expect is that there is no **noticeable** loss of air through any other avenue except the reeds. A good test for any bag regardless of the type is to stopper all the stocks apart from the blowpipe, then blow up the bag as tight as you can, squeeze to compensate for any stretch, then blow into the bag again if you can. If after 20-30 seconds you cannot input any noticeable amount of air, then the bag is airtight enough for your needs. The average piper would blow into the bag somewhere between every 1 to 3 seconds, and so if it takes longer than 20-30 seconds to notice any air-loss, then any air loss after that is purely academic, and will have no real affect upon your playing at all. This applies to any pipe bag, of any make or design. It is whether any minute air loss actually affects one's playing that matters. If this was not so, then as all pipe bags leak, no pipe bag would be suitable for playing.

PROBLEMS

CLEAN CUTTING-OUT PROBLEMS

Some pipers might experience problems in clean cutting out when first using the canister bag system. It is something that can quickly be mastered by most, and is primarily due to the bag being so much more airtight than you might have been used to. It is really a matter of making sure the canister is sitting vertical within the bag, and mastering the timing of when to stop blowing, along with the appropriate arm pressure to expel sufficient air from the bag, then quickly lift the arm at the conclusion of playing. Another cause of unclear cutouts can be the use of some of the all-plastic drone reeds, which have very weak tongues.

WET REEDS

In most cases, to quickly remedy the problem of wet reeds, it is advisable to dry your drones, reeds, stocks etc. as would normally be the case, and remove the canister and replace it with the spare one, which should have been stored in a dry, moisture-proof container. It is also recommended that the inside of the bag be allowed to dry out on completion of your playing sessions. This will not only give you a greater time span for moisture-free playing time when you next play, but as is emphasised below, will greatly extend the life-span of the bag itself.

THE BAG IS NOT AIR-TIGHT

Make sure that the zip is fully closed, and ensure also that all your joints are sound, and that the valve is functioning properly. Ensure that the zip has been lubricated, as a totally dry zip can cause quite bad leakages.

Also refer to the section "AIRTIGHTNESS EXPECTATIONS"

ZIP MAINTENANCE

If properly used and looked after, the zip will likely outlast the bag itself. From time to time, according to the amount of use, it will require the application along the teeth some of the silicon lubricant (as supplied), or a lubricant such as a silicon spray or even Vaseline will do. The reason for the lubrication is that after a time the zip will firm up, and needs lubricating to free the zipping action again. Apart from that, the zips used in our pipe bags are very flexible, and trouble free.

WARRANTY

Our pipe bags carry a two years warranty, which means that if any bag has a problem that is directly related to a manufacturing fault, then the bag shall be either repaired or replaced at the manufacturer's discretion within two years from the date of purchase. Proof of a purchase date must be supplied. Any obvious misuse, gluing or attempts to mend or alter the bags from their initial design, will render the warranty null and void.

IMPORTANT NOTES

For the sake of hygiene and longevity of the bag, it is strongly advised that you allow the inside of the bag to dry out after playing sessions, this is particularly important for wetter blowers and pipers residing in damp climates. The reason for this is that over a period of time, water (particularly when combined with enzymes etc. from your mouth), when left in continual contact with the bag material, helps break down the breathable layer that also makes the bag air-tight, and thereby will greatly reduce the life of the bag.

DO NOT USE THE OLDER WHITE CANISTERS INSIDE THE SUEDE PIPE BAGS, AS THEY WILL IN TIME CAUSE HOLES IN THE BAG MATERIAL, AND SUCH DAMAGE WILL NOT BE COVERED UNDER THE 2 YEAR WARRANTY.