

## Care of Your Practice Chanter

Your practice chanter is a relatively robust musical instrument but that does not mean that it can be used as a drum stick or to be dropped without it coming to harm. Chanters made from African Blackwood are more prone to damage from abuse than the plastic or Polypenco chanter.

To open your chanter grasp it firmly with one hand on the sound chamber and the other hand just below the joint (stop sniggering at the back!) grasping the bowl firmly. Gently twist the chanter in opposite directions and ease the two sections apart in a straight line so that if it all separates with a jerk the reed does not get damaged.

If the chanter proves stubborn and resists opening then a good tip is to wrap a wide elastic band around the chanter where you are gripping it. This will give you a **much** better grip of the chanter. **Tip:** This works great for hard-to-move- parts of bagpipes as well. You can often borrow a rubber charity band from the wrist of a fellow band member or passer by ☺.

Remove the reed by grasping it as close to the bottom as possible without touching the blades, give it a twist and pull.

A plastic chanter can be cleaned using warm soapy water and a very narrow brush (available from suppliers of bagpipes). This should only be necessary very infrequently unless you are in the habit of playing while eating ☺.

A Blackwood chanter can also be cleaned using the same method but please do not soak the instrument as the wood will absorb the moisture, swell up and quite probably crack, ruining your rather expensive instrument.

The mouthpiece on both types of chanter is usually plastic and can be disinfected if you so desire by pouring some mouthwash into a cup and upending the top half of the chanter in the cup so that the wood is not soaked.

Having said all this, the cleaning and disinfection of chanters is **not** something which is done on a regular basis by most players so it's not something to get hung up on overmuch.

A Blackwood chanter should always have the top half swabbed out (kitchen roll does well here) after use and left separated from the bottom half to allow the moisture from your breath (and dribbles. Yuk!) to dry off. Remove the reed, give the area around the reed seat a dry off and blow gently through the reed from the bottom end to displace any moisture. Replace the reed.