

CROZIER DRONE REEDS

www.schoolofpiping.com

Crozier Reed has been on the market for some years now and there have been a number of changes and developments. We thought it was about time that we updated our reviews combining all three of their reed options into one review to try and help pipers to choose which would be most suited to their needs.

Crozier Carbon Reeds

The carbon bladed reed has a preset body, with a ramped bed for the flat carbon blade to lie upon. The angle of the bed can only be adjusted by the maker if there are any issues with the reed stopping etc. The blade is held by a rubber O ring recessed into the reed body and an identical O ring is used as a bridle. These are very effective. The reed has a long hemped section which seats well into the drone. The hemp should be replaced as the waxed thread provided is thick and does not seat as well as it could.

These are truly a plug and play reed in most sets of pipes. I like the tone off the bass drone and the tenors are vibrant but can be a little buzzy in some drones with strong high end harmonics. We found the bass difficult to set up in old Glen's drones, most others were easy. The tenors will be exceptionally steady if perfectly matched for strength. If not they will seem unsteady in the hands of a poor blower.

The combination of the bridle, rubber tuning plug and quite a long hemped section for seating the drone gives a substantial variation of pitch and tone setting options.

There is little that I can say that is negative about these reeds, they are highly recommended, bright in tone, strong on higher end harmonics, easy to set up and tune with a little knowledge of strength setting of reeds.



Crozier Carbon Reed

Crozier Glass Reeds

The Crozier Glass Fibre bladed reed is the newest of the Crozier reeds on the market. Much like the Carbon bladed reed has a preset body, with a ramped bed for the flat glass fibre blade to lie upon. The reed body is plastic and black in colour to define it from the blue carbon reed as we can only assume the ramped bed for the blade varies between these models. The blade is held in place by a rubber O ring recessed into the reed body and an identical O ring is used as a bridle. These are very effective and certainly with the Carbon reeds that have been on the market for some time, they do not seem to lose their integrity. The reed has a long hemped section which seats well into the drone. The binding supplied with the reed should always be replaced as the waxed thread provided is too thick and does not seat as well as it could in my opinion.

These are truly a plug and play reed. I like the tone off the bass drone and the tenors are vibrant and full sounding. Probably a little more mellow than the Carbon bladed reeds, but we felt they had a better tonal depth and characteristic as a set. The tenors will be exceptionally steady if perfectly matched for strength. If not they also will seem unsteady in the hands of a poor blower.

The set up with the tuning plug and bridles is exactly the same as the Carbon Reeds so adjustability is very good for both pitch and tone. The glass tongue seems to give very good stability particularly in a variety of temperatures.

There is little that I can say that is negative about these reeds. We had no trouble setting them up in a variety of bagpipes, they tuned in the appropriate place with a little adjustment in each case and if set properly showed no sign of any significant fault. Quite easy for a novice player to set up and manage, just a little balancing experience would help with the end result. I would have no hesitation playing these in either solo or band settings. A product we would highly recommend.



Crozier Glass Reeds

Crozier Cane Reeds

These reeds look similar to the Crozier Carbon Reeds but actually are very different. They are a modification of the old Ross Drone Reeds, one of the first synthetic reeds on the market. They are made of a different material, but have a similar body to the Ross with a more refined pitch. The blades are longer than the cane blades of the old Ross Reeds and are anchored by a silicon rubber sleeve. A second sleeve is used as a bridle. They have a good sized end for hemping giving better support in the reed seat than the old Ross Reeds.

The bridle can become soft in extreme temperatures and may become a little unstable when played in VERY hot weather. We noticed this at temperatures above 36 Celsius. We noted some added stability by binding the end of the blade with waxed hemp in lieu of the silicon band. Also a second bridle on the bass reeds helped with stability. The bass has a tendency to flatten against the tenors with playing and the second bridle and shortening the blade length with the bridle helped achieve better results.

The set up with the tuning plug and bridles is very similar to the Carbon Reeds so adjustability is very good for both pitch and tone. Again it is recommended to get the strength of the reeds matching for best stability.

Tonally I think this is one of the best synthetic reeds on the market. The blades however are cane so there can be some inconsistencies with blade strength and stability. Some spare blades and these are worth persisting with. They offer a little more tonal depth than the other options, and not as strong on the higher end harmonics. They also produce a very bright, vibrant drone sound.



Crozier Cane Reed

Omega Drone Reeds

The Omega reed has the same straight blade and a similar curved reed body concept to the Crozier Carbon Reed. It is all held together by a steel bracket which, with the aid of a series of grub screws is adjustable in a multitude of ways. There is a grub screw that holds the blade in place. Do not over tighten this as it can split the blade. There is a grub screw that holds the metal clamp that acts as a bridle in place. Do not over tighten this as it also can split the blade, but ensure it will not move from its set place. There is a grub screw that fits into the rear of the reed and adjusts the curvature of the

body, altering the strength of the reed. We have found these can vibrate loose and rather than over tighten them, a little “lock tight” works well. There are three holes where this screw can be placed increasing the adjustability of the curvature of the reed body.

We have found the reeds to open up a little in strength in hotter weather and close off in the cold. This can affect the set up when playing during the day and later on a colder night. This obviously has to do with the expansion and contraction of the steel clamp. This also can hold a shape, so if trying to weaken the reed, it is advisable to loosen the grub screw at the rear, bend the body to a more closed position and then adjust the grub screw to obtain the required strength.

Initially I found the reed quite confusing, until I established a formula to get the result that I wanted. I found them overall to be a little buzzy in tone with strong high end harmonics particularly in the tenors. I used a rubber O ring to separate the steel clamp from the reed seat, giving some cushioning when seating the reed. I then sleeved the canister of a Ross system which reduced the airflow much in the same way as a valve or tone enhance and achieved a more pleasant result to my ear.

With a long hemped section, amazing amount of reed strength and bridle adjustability, and a tuning plug these reeds have a significant tuning range. Again these are at their steadiest when set to equal strength.

This reed offers the ultimate in adjustability, but can be a little confusing for a novice and is somewhat effected by temperature.



Omega Drone Reed

Summary

The **Carbon reed** offers a vibrant tone, is very easy to set up and has strong high end harmonics. They are reliable and long lasting.

The **Glass reed** has a more mellow tone and a little less of the high end harmonics. They are very easy to set up and are reliable and long lasting. They are very stable in varying temperatures.

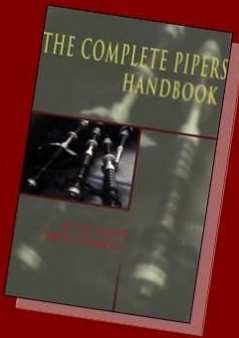
The **Cane reed** is the best of all the Crozier reeds for tone quality as far as our testing was concerned. They produce a little less volume than the others and sometimes not quite as easy to set up. The cane blades can vary in quality due to the nature of cane.

The **Omega reed** offers the ultimate in adjustability, but can be confusing for the novice. The tonal difference can be noticeable but this is all dependent on the skill of the person setting the reeds up. We found some susceptibility to temperature variation.

Crozier Reeds are available from the School of Piping Shop at:
http://www.schoolofpiping.com/shop/bagpipes_and_accessories.html

A guide such as “The Complete Pipers Handbook” would greatly assist in helping to set these reeds up and get the best possible results. <http://www.schoolofpiping.com/handbook.html>

Numerous similar reviews are located at www.schoolofpiping.com

The image shows the cover of the book 'The Complete Pipers Handbook'. The cover is dark with a photograph of a piper playing a bagpipe. The title 'THE COMPLETE PIPERS HANDBOOK' is written in a light, serif font at the top. Below the title, there is a smaller, less legible title and some text.

The Complete Pipers Handbook

Is a must for every serious piper. Never before has a more comprehensive guide been published. Maintenance, set up, refinement, tuning, setting up bands, performance psychology and much more!

Available from: www.schoolofpiping.com selected stockists.