

Boatswain Calls

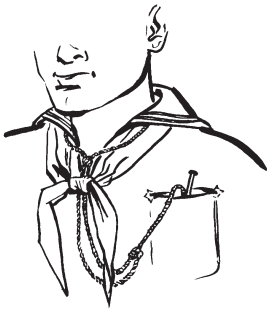
The Boatswain's Pipe

The boatswain's pipe in the early days was known as the "whistle of command" and had its origin in the rowing galley of Grecian ships. Although it may look and sound a bit like a whistle, it is in reality a musical instrument on which many kinds of calls may be played. It is not like the whistle that a coach might use with his squad.

The pipe is used only by the boatswain and crew leaders, not by the Skipper or the mate. The Skipper or the mate issues orders verbally to the boatswain who, in turn, either uses a pipe or passes the orders on verbally to the crew leaders. The crew leaders wear the boatswain's pipe as an indication of their office and also to transmit orders to their crews.

Wearing the Boatswain's Pipe

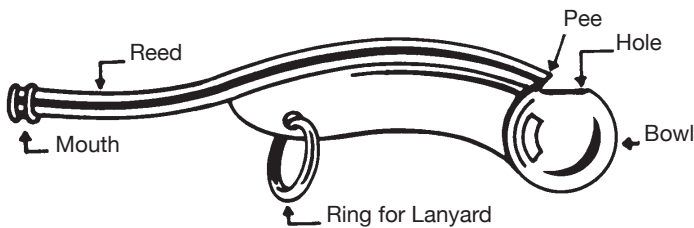
The boatswain's pipe is worn suspended on a white lanyard and carried in the pocket on the left-hand side of the blouse.



Tuning the Pipe

The pipe can be tuned by adjusting the pee or by flattening or soldering the sides so as to fill the space between the pee and the bowl. Sometimes the call can be improved by scraping the wind edge or enlarging the hole in the bowl by filing.

It is essential that the reed strike the hole fairly. This can be tested by pushing a broom straw down through the reed and adjusting the wind edge until it splits the straw.



If correctly tuned, the pipe should sound even when blown very lightly with the hand open. With the hand closed, the call should sound clear and shrill when blown rather hard.

Positions of the Hand

There are four hand positions: open, curved, closed, and clinched. These positions will also indicate the lung force or the necessary pressure of blowing air. As a rule, the open hand calls for the least pressure needed to make a soft, clear note; the clinched hand calls for the most wind pressure possible to make a note shrill and clear.

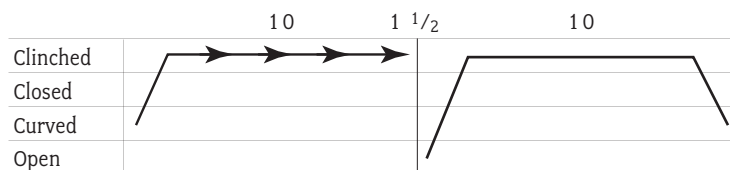


Learning the Calls

To learn the six calls used in Sea Scout ceremonies, you must first understand the score. Note that the illustration for each call shows how the four positions of the hand are designated in the four spaces of a musical staff.

All Hands

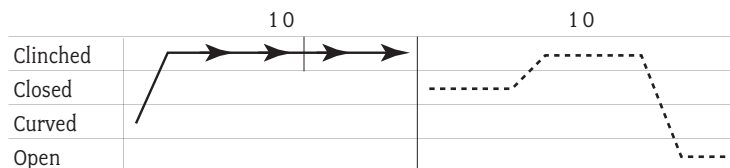
This is piped to assemble all hands. Close to clinched and impulse softly about three times, holding the shrill 10 seconds, ending sharp; again close to clinched softly, hold the second shrill 10 seconds, and allow it to fall softly to a finish for three seconds. Follow with the order: "All hands on deck!" (or wherever they are to assemble).



Pipe Down

This is piped for dismissal from all ceremonies and assemblies, and for any meal.

It is a combination of the calls "word to be passed" and a "veer" of about 10 seconds, ending in a sharp, short peep. Follow with the order: "Dismissed" or "Fall in for mess."



Piping the Side

This is piped to accompany side honors. Start in open with a low, smooth note; rise slowly to the shrill; fall faster to a low note; and finish with a low, soft shrill. Officers and side boys come to salute at first note and hold it until the last note. The boatswain holds the call with the right hand and salutes left-handed.

