of

REALLY USEFUL INFORMATION

compiled by

"CHAS. MUNDUNGUS"

SIMULACRAN PRESS
2008 (Revised)

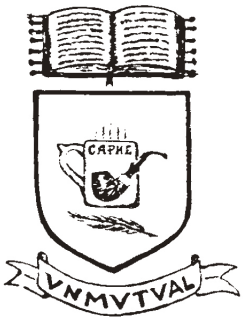
A PIPEMAN'S HANDBOOK

OF

REALLY USEFUL INFORMATION

Compiled by

"Charles Mundungus"



SIMULACRAN PRESS
2008 (Revised)

CHAR-LIGHT
(An Introduction of Sorts)

This ***Handbook*** is the sort of thing I have been looking for since I took up the pipe over thirty years ago but have never found. While there have been some decent pipe books over the years, none of them really talked about the useful stuff, the ***praxis*** of the Art of Smoking. For a while in the 1980s I tried publishing my own little pipeman's zine, but even that didn't help me answer some of the basic questions every pipeman has regarding his art. Then came the internet. And with it, pipemen from all over the world began to come together and share their collective experience.

This anthology began as a web-crawl in search for a method to restore my aging, oxidized stems and recondition the bowls to which they were attached. My search was a long one, piecing together various fragments and bits of advice, then trying them out in the workshop. One search led to another, and I began to ferret out various other topics I've had on my mind for some time, things like health issues connected with pipe-smoking, nomenclature for this or that piece of the pipe, aging tobacco, packing it, books about the literature of pipe-smoking, and so on. When I found something great, I book-marked it. But being of a certain age, I longed for something more. I wanted it all in one place, and I wanted it in a non-electronic form I could hold in my hands—a book. What you're reading now on your computer screen as a PDF (or if you're of a certain age have probably printed off and hold in your hands) has been assembled as a reference work to answer the fundamental questions about the Art of Pipe Smoking. None of it is original to me, although I've written and included a simplified a method of pipe restoration based on the advice of others.

A Pipeman's Handbook of Really Useful Information is the result of pipemen just like you, folk who have been smoking for six months or sixty years, and done us all the service of sharing their wisdom. I have cited the authors and URLs where and when I found them. Most of the pipemen I have dealt with on the internet were thoughtful, considerate, and free with their advice. A few, of course, weren't. I have consulted an internet librarian at the local university, who assures me that no copyright infringement has been incurred—everything you find in these pages is offered free of charge, with directions to the web site where I found the original document. The "value-added" is simply to have them all in one place.

Over thirty years have passed since I took up the pipe, but then as now I can count the number of pipe-smokers I have within my personal, face-to-face acquaintance on one hand. We are a peculiar breed, and it is with some justification that many of us think of ourselves as "briar friars" in the pursuit of the joys and solace that only a pipe can bring. If you find this document useful, feel free to pass it on to anyone else who might benefit from its advice.

For this revision (2013), I have simply corrected the pagination of the Table of Contents and added an appendix in the form of Neil Archer Roan's "Novice's Guide to Buying Estate Pipes," a series which ran on his *A Passion for Pipes* blog, and which I suspect will be the definitive treatise on this subject for many years to come.

"Chas. Mundungus"
Easter 2013

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAR-LIGHT (AN INTRODUCTION OF SORTS) **3**

PIPE ANATOMY CHART (ASP) **5**

PIPE PACKING
- A Basic Method (Uncle Bob) **9**
- Air Pocket Packing (from Fred Hanna) **10**
- Flake (Slices) Packing (MacBaren) **11**

GUIDE TO CLEANING & CARING FOR YOUR PIPE (smokingpipes.com) **19**

PIPE REFINISHING (Mundungus)
- The Stem Deoxidation Method **21**
- Rim Tar Removal **23**
- Bowl Cleaning (the Salt Slush) **24**

PIPE TOBACCO AGING, STORING, AND CELLARING (Newquist) **25**
- Fundamentals **26**
- Aging **31**
- Tin Storage Issues **39**
- Bulk Storage Issues **43**
- Jarring Guide **50**
- Cellaring **55**
- Tobacco Categorization **[Types & Styles of Tobacco]** **60**
- Flakes **71**
- Tobacco Touchstones **[Specific Brand Classics of Tobacco]** **80**
- **A Pipe Tobacco Glossary** **86**

WHICH TOBACCO FOR ME? (TOBACCO REVIEWS) (Mundungus) **88**

THE RISKS OF PIPE SMOKING (Boyd / Gaboriau) **89**

AN INSTRUCTIONAL NOTE TO THE PIPE SMOKER AND PIPE COLLECTOR: RECOMMENDED READING (Rapaport) **92**

PETERSON PIPES
- Anatomy Chart (Peterson) **111**
- Hallmarks (Peterson) **112**
- A Peterson Dating Guide (Mike Leverette) **118**
- The Mark Twain Pipe (Mundungus) **119**

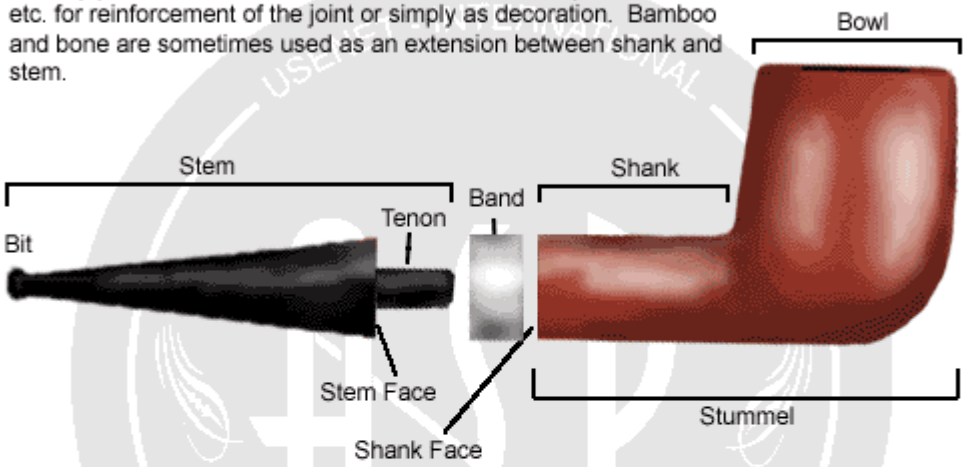
THE NOVICE'S GUIDE ON HOW TO BUY PIPES (Roan) **Appendix**

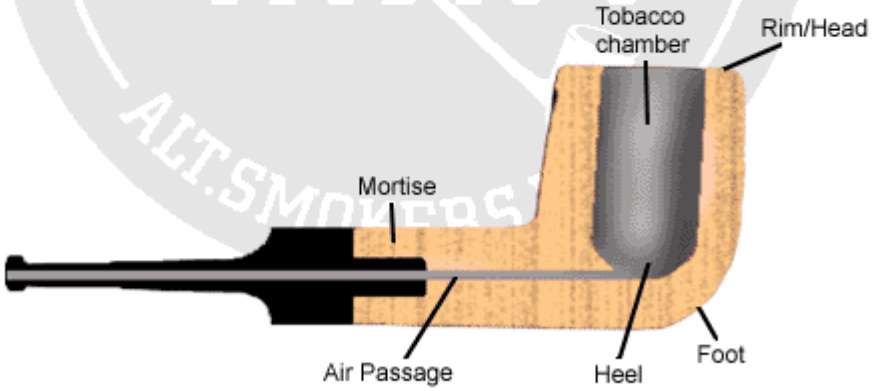
PIPE ANATOMY

The following anatomy, "Pipe Parts," was taken from the Alt.Smokers.Pipes website, www.aspipes.org , August 2007.

Pipe Parts - Page 1

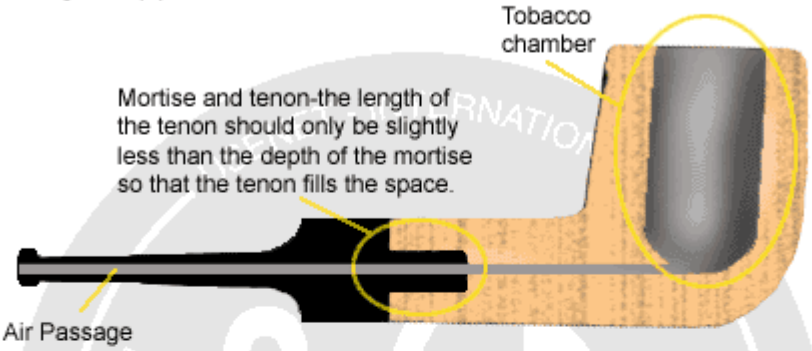
Standard briar and meerschaum pipes consist of a stem attached to a stummel (bowl and shank). The stem may be made of vulcanite-a hard rubber material, plastic (lucite, perspex), amber or horn.
The joining is usually by way of a tenon in the stem which fits into a mortise in the shank. This makes it possible to remove the stem from the shank for cleaning.
Some pipes feature a band or ferrule made of metal, plastic, horn, etc. for reinforcement of the joint or simply as decoration. Bamboo and bone are sometimes used as an extension between shank and stem.



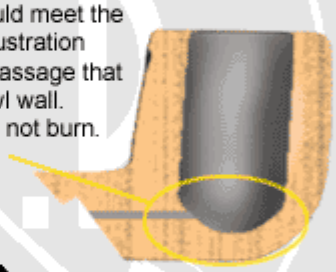


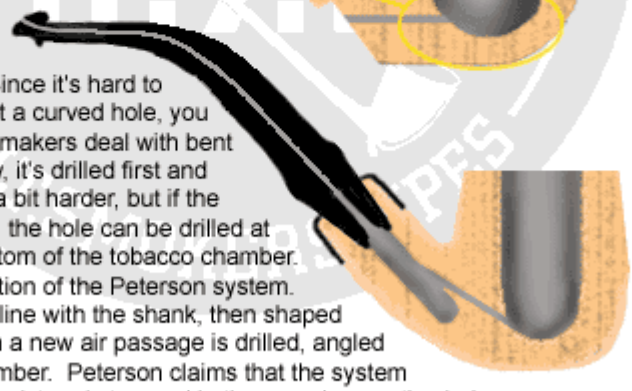
Pipe Parts - Page 2

No matter how pretty a pipe is, from a smoking standpoint, it's the hidden inside part that is most important. A well-designed and well-built pipe will probably smoke very well, while a poorly designed, poorly built pipe will always be a disappointment. Here is a look at the inner workings of a pipe.



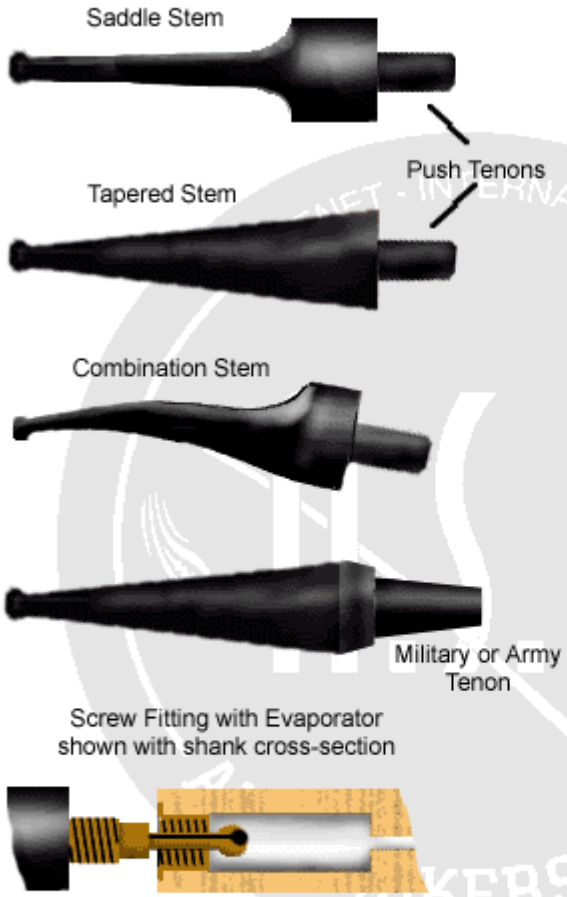
In a correctly drilled pipe, the air passage should meet the tobacco chamber at bottom center as in the illustration above. To the right is an illustration of an air passage that joins the tobacco chamber too high on the bowl wall. Tobacco in the bowl below the air passage will not burn. Something to look for in choosing a new pipe.





How do they do that? Since it's hard to find a drill bit that will cut a curved hole, you might wonder how pipe makers deal with bent pipes. The stem is easy, it's drilled first and then bent. The bowl is a bit harder, but if the mortise is large enough, the hole can be drilled at an angle toward the bottom of the tobacco chamber. To the right is an illustration of the Peterson system. The mortise is drilled in line with the shank, then shaped for a military tenon, then a new air passage is drilled, angled toward the tobacco chamber. Peterson claims that the system smokes drier because moisture is trapped in the oversize mortise hole.

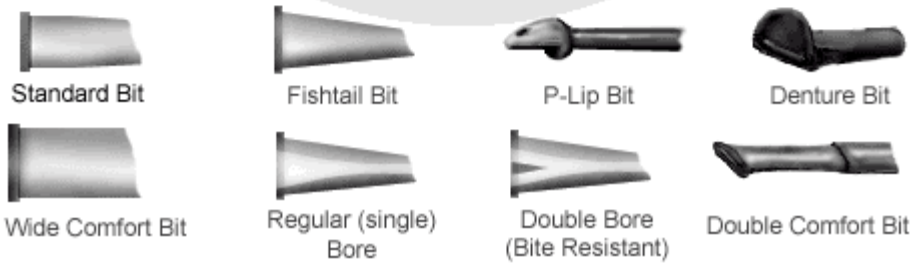
Pipe Parts-Page 3



Stems come in three varieties: the saddle stem, the tapered stem and the combination, which is tapered on one side and saddle on the other. The fitting between the shank and the stem involves a mortise in the shank and a tenon on the stem. The push tenon has a straight-sided mortise and tenon. The military or army tenon has a tapered mortise and tenon to make it easy to remove the stem without damage when the pipe is still warm-something you should not do with a push tenon.

Inexpensive pipes are often made with metal screw fittings instead of mortise and tenon. These fittings usually include a metal tube called an evaporator designed to reduce the amount of moisture going into the stem.Unfortunately, they work poorly, if at all.

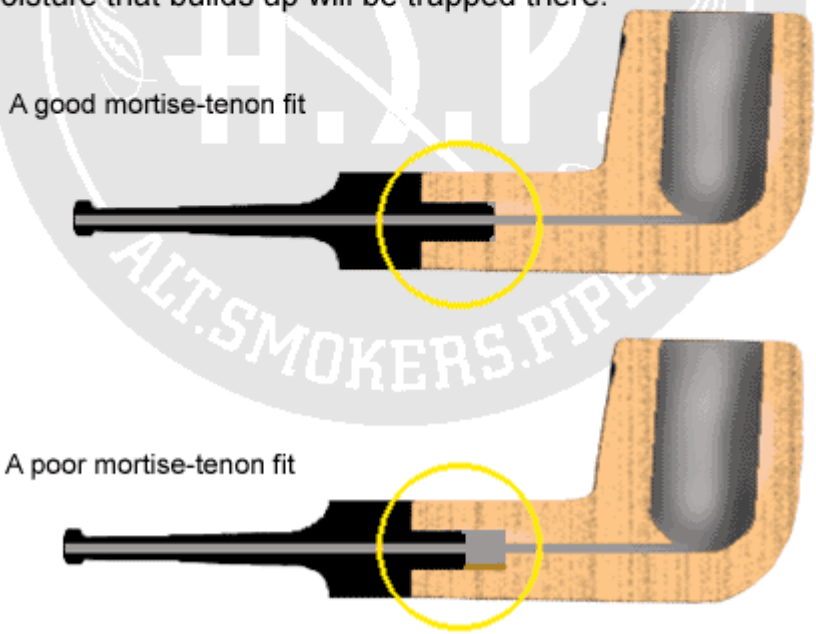
Some materials, such as meerschaum are more fragile than briar, so bone or plastic tenons are used for durability.



Pipe Parts-Page 4

Probably the most important qualities that separate good pipes (or good-smoking pipes) from great pipes are hidden deep inside. The fit between the mortise and tenon is critical to a dry smoke. If the tenon is too long, there will be a gap between the stem and shank. If the tenon is too short, it creates an open area, as in the lower illustration, that allows the moist smoke and air mixture to expand. This expansion causes the mixture to cool and the moisture to condense. Once the moisture has condensed, the stem acts like a straw (yecch!).

Many pipemakers trim off the sharp outside edges of the tenon to leave a small gap between the tenon and mortise without affecting the airhole fitting in hopes that any moisture that builds up will be trapped there.



PIPE PACKING

A BASIC METHOD
by Uncle Bob at Just for Him (www.justforhim.com) (found March 2008)

Pipe packing is basically a three step process.

Step #1: Sprinkle the tobacco loosely into the pipe until it fills up to the brim. Note that I said sprinkle loosely and not pinch and put! This is one of the biggest problems with even guys who know how to pack their pipes! Sprinkle loosely until full and then poke it down until the bowl is half full. If you have a tapered bowl then you may wish to make it more like two-thirds. If you were to draw on the pipe there would be little if any resistance.

Step #2: Sprinkle loosely again until the bowl is full. Poke it down evenly until the bowl is three-fourths full. If you were to draw on the pipe there would be a little resistance; say less than a cigarette.

Step #3: Sprinkle loosely until the bowl is full and then round up the top so that a little mound of tobacco rests over the bowl. The mound should be less than a half inch tall and nicely rounded. Then poke it down flat and even with the brim of the bowl. If you were to draw though the pipe it would seem slightly less resistance than a cigarette. The pipe should be ready for the lighting!

Lighting: Now I know that many of you out there are now going, "Hmphf! Why is he bothering me with this?" But this art is often lost in today's hustle and bustle light up a quick cigarette world. If you have problems keeping your pipe lit even after packing correctly then try this: take five or six puffs as you walk the flame around the whole bowl charring the entire area of the tobacco. Then tamp the ashes flat and even and relight using another five or six good puffs and you are ready to go!

Tamping: Many pipe smokers will pack and light their pipes correctly and still have problems keeping the pipe lit or smoking the entire pipeful. The reason is that they are tamping too hard! When you tamp your pipe you should only be crushing the ashes flat and even; not pushing down tobacco! You may tamp as much as you like, but just push down the burning ashes onto the unburning tobacco. Keep it even and keep the draw consistent.

AIR POCKET PACKING
adapted from Fred Hanna, Pipes and Tobaccos (Winter 2007)

Many pipemen are turning to the APP method, which (at least in my experience) seems to live up to its claims to produce a cooler, more flavorful smoak.

Because of copyright issues, I can't quote the Hanna method verbatim, but offer a paraphrase of its salient points. Interested readers can track down the article or purchase the back-number of Pipes and Tobaccos, but the following should do the trick.

Step #1. Squeeze or compress a large portion of your favorite tobacco into a clump between your tumb and first three fingers. The clump must be large enough to fit tightly into the upper half of your bowl.

Step #2. Leaving the bottom half of the bowl empty, force the clump into the upper half of the bowl with a shove so that the upper half of the tobacco chamber is tightly packed. Remember: no tobacco in the bottom half of the bowl!

Step #3. Immediately after shoving the clump in, give a twist to the remainder of the clump, screwing it in. You could also shove and screw at the same time. Don't press the center of the clump. You're just trying to get it at just below rim level. If some strands remain over the rim, remove them or else push the entire clump down a bit more.

Step #4. Check the draw. If you can't draw air through the pipe, it's packed too tightly and you'll need to take the clump out and start over. The draw should have about the same or a little lighter resistance than you experience in the Basic Method.

Step #5. Light the center of the clump. There's no need to go around the entire top surface with your flame, as the center light will eventually ignite the tobacco around the circumference of the bowl. If your tobacco seems to require a char-light (like my Virginia Flakes), give it a light tamping, being careful not to press the clump down into the bowl.

The Remainder of the Smoak. This type of packing produces a really easy draw. It also keeps the tobacco lit better than other methods. You should notice an increase in the flavor of your favorite tobacco as well.

At some point well into the smoak, when you tamp the clump will fall into the bottom of the bowl. Just give it a light tamp to keep it together.

The method also delivers (again, in my experience as in Mr. Hanna's and others who have used it) a cooler smoak. For Virginia smoakers, this may prove to be the ultimate packing method. I wonder if I could take up MacBaren Virginia #1 again?

--"Chas Mundungas"

FLAKE (SLICES) PACKING

Flake—Much Better than Its Reputation
by Per Georg Jensen, Mac Baren Tobacco Company A/S (www.mac-baren.com) (March 2008)

How many pipe smokers have not cast a suspicious glance at that small tin of flake tobacco and said to themselves that they would rather have a "normal" pouch of tobacco - partly because the packet is bigger and partly because you do not have to spend time preparing the tobacco. But this would be to deny yourself a unique tobacco experience. Because a pipe filled the right way with flake tobacco is an extraordinary smoking experience.

Throughout my adult life I have been among pipe smokers – the first 23 years as a pipe maker with Georg Jensen Pipes and the last 4 years as "Tobacco Professor" at Mac Baren. During all these years I have very often encountered prejudice among many pipe smokers towards flake tobaccos, and never have I savoured a moment more than when the idea behind flake tobacco is explained to a pipe smoker for the first time, and then he fills his pipe with it and lights it. To see his face slowly transform into an understanding smile, to watch his eyes light up as the taste of a well-prepared flake tobacco pipe provides convincing evidence, is an experience not to be missed.

Why are so few pipe smokers familiar with flake tobacco? To find the answer to this question, we must look at how society has developed from the 1800s to the present day. In the last century, when pipe smoking was very common, a father would normally give his son a pipe on his confirmation. The son would draw on the father's experience, ask questions and find out how the various tobaccos should be smoked in order to get the maximum pleasure out of this unique plant that is a product of nature. While pipe smoking is not difficult, good advice passed on by your own father nevertheless proved invaluable. I was such a son, who gained from the experiences of his father just as he had from his father before him.

Today, to put it mildly, it is considered "politically incorrect" to give a pipe as a confirmation gift. The giver of such a gift would be the subject of much acrimony, with the result that the "father to son" tradition has all but disappeared. And with the disappearance of this tradition, the experiences gathered by pipe smokers for generations are also being lost. This has inspired me to pass on the experiences I gained from my father to pipe smokers all over the world.

Is flake tobacco difficult to smoke?
As with every good thing in life, you have to be prepared to devote to it the most valuable thing we have – time. Flake is a tobacco where, as a pipe smoker, I devote the time that it takes to properly prepare a flake tobacco pipe, I enjoy the pleasure of expectation, and I smile with satisfaction as the preparation and expectation turn into sheer enjoyment. Allow me to make one thing clear: there is nothing difficult involved in enjoying flake tobacco. You just have to know what to do. No doubt there are many different ways of smoking flake tobacco and it is not possible to categorically say which is the right one. Here I would like to pass on the advice that I was given, and when you know how flake is produced and the

qualities that tobacco takes on when it has been pressed, the advice contained herein will make good sense.

I have chosen to structure the story of flake under the following chapter headings:

1. History of flake tobacco
2. Production of flake tobacco
3. How to fill the pipe with flake

Flake Tobacco in the Whirl of History

When and where the first flake tobacco was produced is uncertain, but what is known for a fact is that pressed tobacco was invented to solve a major problem at the time in a country with great seafaring traditions. Turn back time some 300-400 years, and you find that pipe smoking was the most common way to enjoy tobacco – and seafarers were among its most avid advocates.

Among seamen in particular, pipe smoking was highly esteemed – but there were problems with storing the tobacco. Way back at the beginning of the history of tobacco, spun and loose tobaccos were the forms most commonly found. But on long sea voyages the tobacco would become dry and the taste deteriorated. Many seamen tried moistening the tobacco with water to prevent this problem, while others tried packing the tobacco in canvas and sealing it with liquid tar to retain the moistness. No doubt this did help to retain moistness, but it was found that when the tobacco was smoked it had a very strong taste of tar. Compared with the tobacco we know today, smoking it must have been quite an unpleasant experience and would certainly have given nowhere near the pleasure a good tobacco gives. Others experimented by boiling water and sugar to form brine that was then poured over the tobacco. This method gave the seamen tobacco that tasted better and retained its moisture longer. The sugar brine made the tobacco “fatty” and acted as a binder when the tobacco was pressed together with the hands, which reduced the surface area so that the tobacco did not dry out as quickly. At the same time, tobacco pressed in this way took up less space, which was a great advantage on a cramped ship. Thus sugar brine helped to keep the tobacco moist for a longer period of time.

The experience thus gained eventually came to the notice of the tobacco factories, and after numerous failed attempts the first blocks of pressed tobacco were eventually ready for market. It is not known which factory or country can take the credit for the “invention” of flake tobacco, but seamen were now able to buy ready-pressed tobacco – and pressed substantially harder than they could manage by hand. So seamen finally had a tobacco that dried out much more slowly, and what had started out as a problem and an irritation to seamen eventually culminated in a new type of tobacco – pressed tobacco.

Seamen everywhere quickly got used to the new type of pressed tobacco and soon refined a method of filling the pipe with it. In fact, the right method is really very simple – once you know how to do it.

When ships were at sea the seamen had to follow the captain's rules about smoking on board, which meant that smoking was only allowed in a certain part of the ship and only with the captain's permission (today we are familiar with the no smoking concept, but in those days the rules were introduced to prevent the wooden ships cathing fire). When a seaman was granted permission to smoke, he quickly fetched his pipe and tobacco, went astern and the ritual would begin. The tobacco block was placed on the cutting board and with his knife he would cut slices of tobacco as thinly as possible. The seamen called a slice a “flake” (today we are all familiar with the term “Navy Cut”, which actually dates from the birth of the flake).

Once the appropriate number of "flakes" had been cut, the tobacco was folded down the middle and bent into a U shape, taking great care not to loosen the tobacco. Now the pipe could be filled with the tobacco.

Here I will just stop for a moment to create the right mood. Naturally, it was important for the seaman to enjoy a good pipe of tobacco, but equally important was the camaraderie with his colleagues that always accompanied a good smoke. When the captain gave permission to smoke, fellow seamen from all sections of the ship would gather and the ritual of cutting the tobacco and filling the pipe became more than just a seaman's experience – it was a social event. While enjoying the tobacco, important topics would be discussed and – another significant element in those days – snippets of news would be exchanged between the seamen. News passed on during a tobacco session would quickly spread throughout the ship. There can be no doubt that officers, too, used these "smoking breaks" as a way of spreading information to the crew of the ship.

However, pipe smoking also served another very important function. Imagine being on board a large sailing ship in a raging storm. For days the wind has been ripping at the sails and massive waves are breaking over the decks. The entire crew are fighting for their lives against the forces of nature.

The stress building up in each man has to be dealt with at some point – and this is where pipe smoking comes in. When the storm finally abates and the captain again gives permission to smoke, it is not just the act of smoking that is important. Filling the pipe, lighting it, slowly exhaling the smoke… the pure satisfaction and enjoyment of a properly filled pipe were all part of the pleasures of pipe smoking. Another important aspect of pipe smoking was the psychological effect. The seamen would stand shoulder to shoulder, each with his pipe, and talk among themselves – many would take the opportunity to gather their thoughts, reflect on the dangerous situation they had just been through and let the stress slowly subside with every puff on the pipe. With only a slight stretch of the imagination, you could say that pipe smoking can in some instances be considered as "psychological first aid", or at least a means whereby one's psychological balance can be regained. Many will have used this moment of camaraderie to talk out their sorrows and concerns, and the others will certainly have rallied round and tried to help where they could. In any case, many topics were doubtless mulled over in this way, and simply being able to talk about problems and sorrows with others must have been a great help. At other times the atmosphere will have been more relaxed and congenial, and then the pipe smokers probably told jokes and poked good-natured fun at one another. Who has not experienced the cheerful atmosphere that so often prevails when smokers gather together?

In this stressful day and age, a pipe would be a good way for many people to counter some of the stress that builds up during the course of the day. To fill a pipe, light it, and lean back in a comfortable chair in peace and quiet is an excellent way to gather your thoughts again – and a pipe full of flake tobacco is a fine way to end the day.

The Production of Flake Tobacco

The present-day production of flake tobacco by Mac Baren does not differ significantly from the method used when flake tobacco came into being. The means may have become more advanced, but the principles have not changed – they remain just as they were 200 years ago.

In order to produce a good flake, we must be fully versed in the old traditions associated with flake tobacco. When a pipe smoker opens a tin of tobacco, he should be aware that the tobacco he holds in his

hands is deeply rooted in these old traditions.

The first thing is to select the tobaccos that will make up the mixture. By using different types of tobacco, we can modify the taste experience of the finished tobacco mixture. Following the selection process the tobacco is threshed, i.e. the large stem is removed from the tobacco leaf. Sugar water is then added to the tobacco, exactly as the seamen used to do when the idea of flake tobacco was still developing.

The sugar water helps emphasise and underpin the natural taste nuances of the tobacco, and also keeps the tobacco moist. After 12 hours the tobacco is then dried, or cured, so that the sugar water that has not been absorbed by the tobacco evaporates. Then the final taste enhancer is added and the tobacco is ready to be pressed. Thus far the production of flake tobacco does not differ from the production of loose cut tobacco – but that all changes from here on.

Compressed
A good flake is characterised by the tobacco being firmly pressed together – and remaining pressed together. This result can only be achieved through the application of carefully tested technique and exceptional instinct on the part of our tobacco experts. We start by adding moisture, in form of steam, to the tobacco. This enhances the natural taste of the tobacco and ensures that it stays firmly pressed together. Given that tobacco is a natural product which differs from year to year and from region to region, the dexterity and experience of our tobacco experts is what determines how much moistness to add.

After the tobacco has been sufficiently moistened, it is packed into a holder measuring 40 x 40 cm and about 1 metre deep. Then a large plunger slowly presses the tobacco together to form a block of tobacco measuring 40 x 40 cm and about 3 cm in thickness. The block is laid on top of the other blocks, and it is important that they are kept under pressure until sufficient blocks have been produced to fill the tobacco press.

The press
When 34 blocks of tobacco have been pressed, they are stacked in the tobacco press. The heavy covers are closed and screwed firmly in position, and a hydraulic press exerts 55 tons of pressure on the tobacco blocks. This may sound a lot – and it is. The blocks of tobacco are subject to this tremendous pressure for 12 hours, after which they are pressed so hard together that the degree of hardness is comparable to that of a wooden board. This slow, constant, strong pressure is the key to the finished flake tobacco not breaking apart and ensures that it retains its block form.

Storage
Now that the tobacco is pressed as hard together as possible, it is allowed time to mature and develop the last nuances of taste. The blocks are again stacked in a storage press, where the iron bars ensure that the pressure is sustained. During the next 30 days the taste develops and spreads evenly throughout the blocks, the taste nuances mix - and an exquisite smoking experience is close to being realised.

Cutting
In days of old, seamen carried a pressed block of tobacco to sea and would cut a slice from the block to have a smoke. Today flake smoking is much easier for pipe smokers, as the tobacco is already cut into slices. First the outer edge is cut off all the way round, as the tobacco at the very edge of the block is a little loose. The rest of the block is then cut into 5 pieces each measuring 7 cm x 40 cm. These 5 pieces are

then placed together and secured in a slicing machine to be cut into 1.4 mm thick slices – so-called flakes. After each cutting the result is studied and any flakes that are too loose are removed.

Packaging
The actual packaging into tins is done by hand. In this way we can be 100% certain that the pipe smokers of the world get a flake tobacco that is consistent and undamaged. The packaging is the crown of this great work that began with selecting the right raw tobaccos, pressing them and generally handling the tobacco with the respect a good flake warrants. Finally, about 40% of the air in the tin is extracted to ensure that the flake tobacco stays fresh for decades.

Our production of flake tobacco is now complete and we are ready to entrust the tobacco to the real main person – the pipe smoker. We at Mac Baren hope that our tobacco will be enjoyed with due regard for the great amount of meticulous work that has gone into its production, combined with respect for the proud traditions of flake tobacco. But are these not just big words and empty talk? No; the extensive work that goes into the production process is a fact.

How to fill a pipe with flake tobacco

As I mentioned in the previous section, many a pipe smoker has cast a suspicious glance at a tin of flake tobacco. On taking the flake out of the tin, they could see clearly that the pressed tobacco simply would not fit into a pipe! If the flake is put in the pipe edgeways it is far too long, with the result that much of the tobacco remains above the rim of the pipe. And if you try to put the flake in the pipe lengthways, it is far too wide. Of course, you could try to screw the tobacco into the pipe, but on closer inspection you will find that there is no screw thread in the tobacco! So it rather looks like a blunder on the part of the producer. However, most pipe smokers are energetic people, and with practice the flake can be easily rubbed loose between the palms of the hands. The result is a loose tobacco that fits all pipes – how difficult can it be!
No doubt some of you are thinking that I am being somewhat sarcastic in describing filling a pipe with flake in this way. But the fact is that many pipe smokers I have spoken to have expressed these thoughts, which sadly has led to many of them deciding not to try flake tobacco. Smoking the tobacco pressed or loose gives a tremendous difference in taste. Pressed tobacco burns slowly and gives a cool smoke, whereas loose tobacco burns faster and at a higher temperature. This gives a different, stronger taste than we have otherwise tried to give the tobacco. Therefore our recommendation is to smoke the tobacco pressed. But let us get to the heart of the matter – namely, how to get the greatest pleasure from flake tobacco.

What to do – step by step
Before you start filling your pipe with flake tobacco, you should be aware that the size of the tobacco hole can vary from pipe to pipe. You should therefore have some experience of how many slices of flake tobacco to use. And while experience is something you gain by trying and testing, I suggest that you read through this flake manual before deciding how many slices of flake tobacco are best for your particular pipe. In general, it is better to use less tobacco to start with and then decide whether to use more next time.

Tip: Remember that flake tobacco expands in the pipe when you smoke it. If you put too much tobacco in the pipe, you will find that there is less draw through the pipe. Therefore I recommend that you use slightly less tobacco and tamp it more often, so that your pipe always gives an optimal draw.

Step 1

Take the number of slices of flake you consider right for your pipe and place them in the palm of your hand. For instance, if you use 1½ slices simply half one slice down the middle and lay the half slice on top of the full slice. Then carefully fold the tobacco down the middle.

Step 2
Hold both ends of the folded tobacco and carefully bend it in the middle to form a U shape. You will find that the tobacco becomes slightly loosened at the base of the U shape – as it should. It is important that you hold the tobacco pressed together so that it only loosens at the base.

Step 3
Lightly press the loosened tobacco at the base so that it is easier to put in the pipe.

Step 4
If you have held the top of the tobacco tightly pressed all the time, you can now put the pressed tobacco in your pipe. If you find that too much of the tobacco is sticking out of the pipe, try removing some of the tobacco before you start folding it.

Step 5
You must now regulate the draw in your pipe. Press lightly on the tobacco, as you would with loose cut tobacco. Remember not to press too hard, as tobacco expands when it becomes hot.

You are now ready to light your pipe. You may find that flake tobacco is a little more difficult to light and to get to burn, but this is simply due to the fact that it is pressed together. You need to concentrate a little more when lighting your pipe, but once the tobacco is burning it will continue to burn quite easily. You do not need to draw as hard or as often as you do with many other tobaccos. It is only when lighting it that the flake requires a little more concentration.