

THE PIOBAIREACHD SOCIETY SET TUNES FOR 2012

The Piobaireachd Society recommends the following lists of tunes for competitions in 2012

SENIOR COMPETITIONS

The Finger Lock	PS 1, K
The Unjust Incarceration	PS 2, K
Colin Roy MacKenzie's Lament	PS 3, K
Mary's Praise	PS 5, K
Craigellachie	PS 6, K
The Stewarts' White Banner	PS 7
The Rout of the Lowland Captain	PS 9
MacLeod of Colbeck's Lament	PS 10

Competitors will submit four of the above tunes, one of which they will be required to play.

GOLD MEDAL COMPETITIONS

The Daughter's Lament	PS 6, K
Farewell to the Laird of Islay	PS 9
The Black Wedder's White Tail	PS 11
My Dearest on Earth give me your Kiss	PS 11
Macintosh of Borlum's Salute	PS 12
Lament for King George III	PS 14
The Gunns' Salute	PS 15
Lament for Captain Donald MacKenzie	PS 15

Competitors will submit three of the above tunes, one of which they will be required to play.

SILVER MEDAL COMPETITIONS

You're Welcome, Ewen Locheil	PS 2, K
The Bicker	PS 4, K
Catherine's Lament	PS 5, K
MacLeod's Short Tune	PS 6, K
Lament for Donald of Laggan	PS 8, K
Salute to Donald	PS 8, K
MacLeod's Controversy	PS 10
The MacGregors' Salute	PS 10

Competitors will submit four of the above tunes, one of which they will be required to play.

PS = Piobaireachd Society Collection K = Kilberry Book of Ceol Mor

Competitors are not restricted to the settings or styles in the books mentioned above, and may play any other setting or style, provided that the judges may take into consideration the authenticity and merits of the setting or style submitted.

Competitors are advised to give advance notice to the judges should they intend to play settings or styles different from sources stated above.

Altogether different tunes known by the same or similar names will not be accepted as alternatives.

This announcement is made by the Piobaireachd Society to ensure earliest publication. It is without prejudice to any arrangements made by either the Argyllshire Gathering or the Northern Meeting.

For the Music Committee

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Stories of the tunes

Senior Tunes

The Finger Lock

This tune is credited to Ronald MacDonald of Morar (c.1700). One story suggests that Calum Mac Raibert was sent by the Earl to Mull to learn the pipes from a master player. Calum was young and careless, and he was rather stiff-fingered. However after learning this tune his master declared that the lock or "glas" had come off Calum's fingers, and from that day he called the tune the "glas mheur", or "fingerlock".

The Unjust Incarceration

Neil, son of MacKay of Strathnaver, was imprisoned on the Bass Rock for nine years in 1427, by James I, in his effort to control the highland clans. Neil escaped following the murder of the King in 1436, and was known thereafter as Neil Vass. Iain Dall MacKay, the blind piper, wrote this tune over 200 years after the event. The music describes the sadness, hope, and anger of imprisonment.

Craigellachie, or The Grants gathering

The Grant's land lies between the upper Craig Ellachie near Aviemore and the lower Craig Ellachie near Rothes, "Stand fast Craig Ellachie" is the slogan of the clan. When signal fires were lit upon the summit of Craig Ellachie, or "the rock of alarm", members of the clan would gather there in order to organize for an attack or defence.

Colin Roy MacKenzie's Lament

The name of this tune honours Colin Roy MacKenzie, who became 1st Earl of Seaforth in 1623. He had already become Lord Kintail in 1611 when he was only 14 years of age. Colin Roy was a favourite at Court and reputedly the best archer in Britain. He died at the age of 36. Angus MacKay's father used to play the variations to Craigellachie to this tune, so Angus composed the variations we play today.

Mary's Praise – Moladh Mairi

A fuller name for this tune is 'Mary's Praise for her Gift'. One story claims that Mary gifted a sheepskin to a piper to use as a bag, whereupon the tune was composed; another states that the present was a sporran, given to Patrick Og MacCrimmon. Yet another says Lamont of Lamont gave his piper a farm in life-rent and the piper, by way of thanks, wrote the tune. The MacLachlan clan claim the tune as theirs, and in some manuscripts it is called the MacLaclan's March.

The Stewarts' White Banner

Angus MacKay (1812 – 1859) chose this name, while others have entirely different titles. Donald MacDonald calls it "Cumadh Dubh Shomhairle – a doleful Lament on the death of Samuel". The Campbell Canntaireachd title "Samuel's Black Dog" is presumably a mistranslation of the Gaelic. Note that another English translation of the name Shomhairle would be Sorley or Somerled, a famous name throughout the West Coast of Scotland, notably Somerled, Lord of Argyll, King of the Hebrides and Kintyre, who died in 1164.

The Rout of the Lowland Captain

This may refer to a skirmish in 1745 where two companies of the Royal Scots commanded by Captain Scott, were waylaid at Highbridge near Fort William by the MacDonalds. The inexperienced Lowlanders were chased back along Loch Lochy, many being wounded or killed, and eventually were persuaded to surrender by Keppoch to prevent a bloodbath. Scott himself was then imprisoned by Lochiel but "treated more as a brother than an enemy or prisoner", and Lady Lochiel dressed his wounds herself.

MacLeod of Colbeck's Lament

John MacLeod of Lewis made his money in Jamaica as a planter, with an estate called Colbecks. This tune was probably written for his eldest son, also named John, who became Colonel of the MacLeod Fencibles and died in London in 1823. The tune was written by John MacKay of Rassay and resembles another of his compositions, "Lament for King George III", described below.

Gold Medal Tunes

Lament for King George III

Another tune written by John MacKay senior. It might seem unusual that a tribute would be paid to a Hanovarian monarch, by a Highlander who grew up in a Jacobite cultural setting. But by 1820 attitudes in the Highlands were changing due, in part, to the perception that King George III had recognized the Gael as an important component of his kingdom.

The Daughter's Lament

The "Daughter's Lament" title comes from Angus MacKay. Other early sources Donald MacDonald and Peter Reid suggest that the tune is a Lament for John Graham of Claverhouse, Viscount Dundee, who died at Killiecrankie in 1689. There is also another entirely different tune, "Lament for Viscount Dundee". Dundee's widow then married Lord Kilsyth, another Jacobite supporter, but died in her first pregnancy. In 1795 the embalmed body of Lady Kilsyth and her baby daughter were discovered when repairs were being made to the kirk in Kilsyth.

Farewell to the Laird of Islay

This is the only complete piobaireachd to have been composed by Angus MacKay, who was piper to the Laird until 1840, and entered the service of Queen Victoria in 1843. Angus' Laird would have been Walter Campbell, father of John Francis Campbell, the celebrated folklorist.

The Black Wedder's White Tail

This tune is only known from the Campbell Canntaireachd. The title refers to the story in which a party of MacGregors killed and ate a wedder (castrated ram) belonging to the Laird of Luss, and this led to feud between the Colquhouns and MacGregors, one event of which was the battle known as The Rout of Glenfruin.

My Dearest on Earth give me your Kiss

This tune was entered into competitions in the early 1800's under different titles including "The Lovely Lady's Request" and "Dear Lady, Give me a Kiss". The accepted title, and the basic tune we play now, were provided by Colin Cameron.

MacIntosh of Borlum's Salute

Borum was a celebrated Jacobite, responsible for the capture of Inverness in 1715. He was captured at the Battle of Preston, and charged with treason. He escaped the night before his trial, fled to France, and returned with an army which was defeated at Glenshiel. He was again captured and died in captivity in Edinburgh Castle in 1743, aged 85. A man of enterprise and daring, he was an early aborigiculturist.

The Gunns' Salute

A tune written by William Gunn (1789 – 1867) who went on to produce a famous collection of Ceol Beag. Clan Gunn is based in northeast Scotland, including Caithness and Sutherland as well as the Orkney Islands. They claim descent from Gunni, grandson of Sweyn Asleifsson, the "Ultimate Viking" and hero of the Orkneyinga Saga. It is a clan without a chief, so the Lord Lyon has recognized a Clan Commander.

Lament for Captain Donald MacKenzie

This is another tune written by John MacKay (1767-1848), Donald MacKenzie was believed to have drowned when the paddle steamer *Comet II* sank half a mile off-shore, after colliding with the *Ayr* near Gourock in 1825. The *Comet* went down in 3 – 4 minutes, killing 62 of its 80 or so passengers. At the moment the accident took place, it is said, the passengers were dancing "and telling and listening to diverting tales". The story goes that the *Ayr*, instead of lending any assistance, turned round and went off to Greenock, leaving them to their fate.

Silver Medal Tunes

You're Welcome, Ewen Lochiel

Sir Ewen Cameron of Lochiel was born in 1629, and led a heroic life. He held out against Cromwell, was knighted by Charles II, reputedly killed the last wolf in Sutherland, and fought with Bonnie Dundee at Killiecrankie – according to legend leading his men in the charge bareheaded and barefooted. Macaulay called Ewen the "Ulysses of the Highlands" due to his enormous strength and size. He lived to be 90, having never lost a drop of blood in any of his brave exploits. His grandson, "Gentle Lochiel", was badly wounded at Culloden.

The Bicker

A bicker is a bucket-shaped traditional drinking vessel with upright handles, but the character of the tune suggests something more dramatic or aggressive. A curious note below the title in Angus MacKay's manuscript says "the extirpation of the Tinkers by order of the King". Note also that there is an entirely different tune called "The Bicker, or Two-faced Englishman" in the same manuscript.

Catherine's Lament

There is no record of why this name was chosen by Angus MacKay. Other suggestions include the Fraser's Gathering or Fraser's Salute.

MacLeod's Controversy

This tune may relate to one of several stories, which describe the MacDonald's and McLeod's strife over the centuries. In one episode, Donald MacDonald of Sleat had married the sister of Rory Mór MacLeod of Dunvegan. When she became disfigured by losing an eye, Donald sent her back to her brother, mounted on a one-eyed horse, with a one-eyed servant and a one-eyed mongrel dog. Years of battles followed this incident. "The MacLeod's Salute" and "the MacDonald's Salute" were played when the two clans finally met to make peace.

[audio:<http://www.piobaireachd.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/macleodcontrubrown.mp3>]

MacLeod's Short Tune

This tune, called by Angus MacKay "A Taunt on MacLeod" may also have been one of the series, written to commemorate the aforementioned series of attacks and counter-attacks between the MacLeod's and MacDonald's in the 1500's. This led "to the utter ruin and desolation of both their countries, until the inhabitants were forced to eat horses, dogs, cats, and other filthy beasts". It ended with the dreadful Battle of the Cuillin in 1601, where the MacDonald's were victors, but with much loss.

Lament for Donald of Laggan

Donald of Laggan was the 8th laird of Glengarry, who died in 1645 aged 102. He was in constant conflict with the neighbouring Grants and MacKenzies, and hostilities included the burning of the church of Cill Chriosd, and the capture and destruction of Glengarry's stronghold, Strome Castle. Both of these events are commemorated in separate tunes of a lively nature, unlike this sublime lament to the old clan chief.

Salute to Donald

Nothing was known of this tune until the Campbell Canntaireachd was "discovered" by chance in the house of Ann Campbell, Oban, in 1909, and the music was transcribed from that record. Presumably the tune is a salute to one of the MacDonald chiefs.

The MacGregors' Salute

The recurring double tap or birl in this tune may represent the cry "Gregorach!" The tune was noted from John MacCrimmon by Alexander Campbell, a pioneer folklorist, who then commissioned Walter Scott to compose the song in which he romanticises the MacGregors' slaughter of the Colquhouns (and a band of innocent clerical students) at the Rout of Glenfruin. The clan were banished as outlaws as a result.

Note that the legends surrounding tunes, and even the names themselves, may or may not have any basis in fact. Having said that many tunes have lovely, or inspiring, names. Pipers may find it useful to consider the name when playing, or to allow the name of the tune to inspire an emotion, which they can then express in the music. However as Archibald Campbell said, in his introduction to the Kilberry book, "the true guide is the music itself".

Peter McCalister