

The Blind Piper's Obstinacy

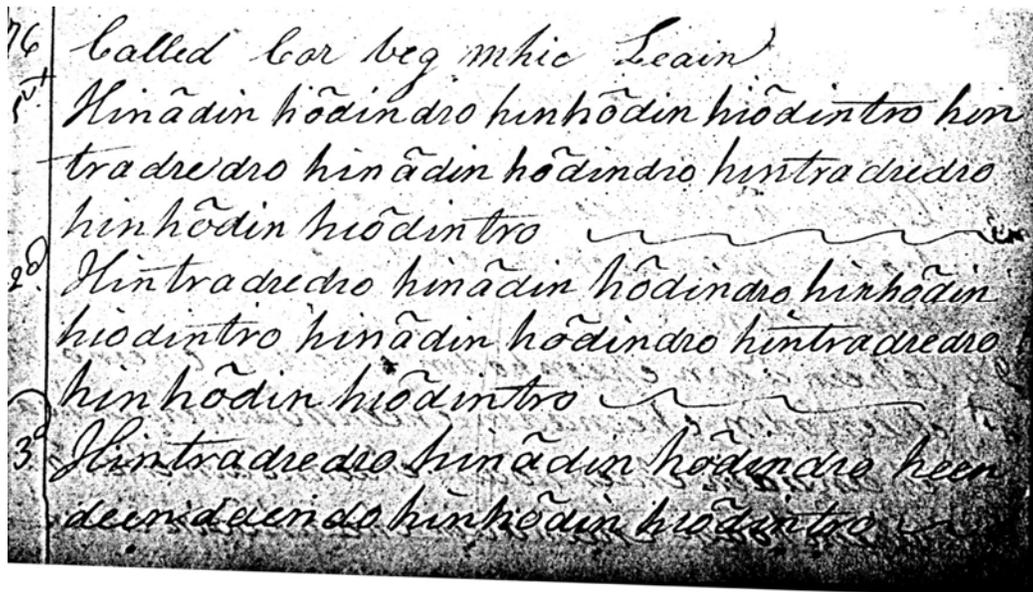
There are settings of this tune in the following manuscripts:

- **Colin Campbell's** "Nether Lorn Canntaireachd" MS, ii, 166-8 (with the title "Cor beg Mhic Leain");
- **Angus MacKay's** MS, ii, ff.95-96;
- **Colin Cameron's** MS, ff.107-108;
- **D. S. MacDonald's** MS, i, 30-32;
- **John MacDougall Gillies's** MS, ff.22-23;
- **David Glen's** MS, ff.245-247;
- **The McLennan Papers**, f.35;

and in the following published sources:

- **C. S. Thomason**, *Ceol Mor*, pp.334-5;
- **William Stewart** of Ensay, *et al.*, *Piobaireachd Society's Collection* (first series), v, 10-11;
- **G. F. Ross**, *Some Piobaireachd Studies*, p.46; also in *Collection of MacCrimmon and Other Piobaireachd*, pp.50-51.

Colin Campbell treats the tune as follows:



pipes | drums

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1. *Hinādin hōdindro hin hōdin hio hōdintro*
hindaen deendo hinādin hōdindro hindaen
deendo hin hōdin o dintro

2. *Hindaen aeendo hinādin hōdindro hin hō*
din o dintro hinādin hōdindro hindaen
deendo hin hōdin o dintro

3. *Hindaen deendo heen deen daendo hin*
hōdin o dintro

First Motion

1. *Cheen daen doen doen cheen doen oen oen*
cheen daen deen doen cheen daen deen deen
cheen daen deen doen cheen doen oen oen

2. *Cheen daen deendoen cheen daen doen deen*
cheen doen oen oen cheen daen deen deen
cheen daen deen doen cheen doen oen oen

3. *Cheen daen deen deen cheen daen deen deen*
heen deen daen doen cheen doen oen oen

1. *Cheenādin hōdin hōdin cheen hōdin o dīn*
o dīn cheenādin deen hōdin cheen ādin hō
ādin hōdin cheenādin deen hōdin cheen hō
dīn o dīn o dīn

2. *Cheen ādin deen hōdin cheen ādin hōdin*
hōdin cheen hōdin o dīn o dīn cheen ādin
hōdin hōdin cheen ādin deen hōdin cheen
hōdin o dīn o dīn

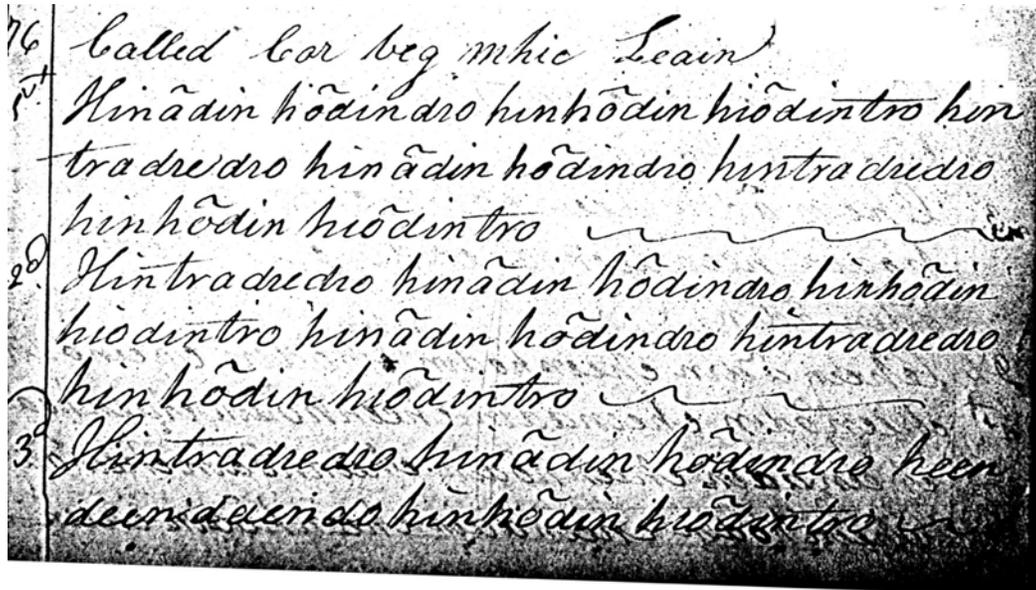
3. *Cheen ādin deen hōdin cheen ādin hōdin*
hōdin heen deen daendo cheen hōdin
ādin o dīn

1. *Cheen ādin cheen hōdin ^{heen} hōdin cheen o dīn*
cheen hōdin cheenādin cheen hōdin cheen hōdin
cheen ādin cheen hōdin cheen hōdin cheen o dīn

2. *Cheen hōdin cheen ādin cheen hōdin cheen*

pipes | drums

168
 hōdin cheen ōdin cheenōdin cheen hōdin
 en hōdin cheenādin cheenhōdin cheen
 cheenōdin
 3, Leheen hōdin cheenādin cheen hōdin cheen
 hōdin cheenādin cheenhōdin cheenhōdin
 cheenōdin
 8, *trulive*
 2, Dreen daen doen doen dreendaen doen doen
 dreendaen deen doen dreendaen doen doen
 daen deen doen dreendaen oen oen
 2, Dreen daen deen doen dreendaen doen doen
 dreendaen oen oen dreendaen doen doen
 daen deen doen dreendaen oen oen
 3, Dreen daen deen doen dreendaen doen doen
 heen deen daen doen dreendaen oen oen
 2, Dreen ādin hōdin hōdin dreenhōdin ōdinōdin
 dreenaadin deenhōdin dreenaadin hōdin hōdin
 dreenaadin deenhōdin dreenhōdin ōdinōdin
 2, Dreen ādin deenhōdin dreenaadin hōdin hōdin
 dreenhōdin ōdinōdin dreenaadin hōdin hōdin
 dreenaadin deenhōdin dreenhōdin ōdinōdin
 3, Dreen ādin deenhōdin dreenaadin hōdin hōdin
 heen deen daendo dreenhōdin ōdinōdin
 2, Dreen ōdin dreenhōdin dreenhōdin dreenoedin
 dreenhōdin dreenaadin dreenhōdin dreenhōdin
 dreenaadin dreenhōdin dreenhōdin dreenoedin
 2, Dreen hōdin dreenaadin dreenhōdin dreenhōdin
 dreenoedin dreenoedin dreenhōdin dreenhōdin
 dreenaadin dreenhōdin dreenhōdin dreenoedin
 3, Dreen hōdin dreenaadin dreenhōdin dreenhōdin
 dreenaadin dreenhōdin dreenhōdin dreenoedin



The following is a possible reading of the score in staff notation:

pipes | drums

'Cor beg mhic Leain' from the Nether Lorn canntaireachd book of Colin Campbell

The image displays a musical score for the pipe tune 'Cor beg mhic Leain'. It is presented in two systems, each consisting of four staves. The first system is marked with a 'D' and the second with an 'S' and 'ffirst Motion'. The music is written in 4/4 time and features a complex, rhythmic melody with many sixteenth notes. The notation includes various ornaments and grace notes, characteristic of traditional Scottish pipe music. The score is arranged in a standard four-staff format, likely representing the four parts of a pipe band.

pipes | drums

The image displays a musical score for pipes and drums, organized into two systems. Each system consists of two staves. The first system is marked with a 'D' above the first staff, and the second system is marked with 'DD' above the first staff. The notation includes treble clefs, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a 2/4 time signature. The music is characterized by a complex, rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together. The score concludes with double bar lines and repeat signs at the end of each system.

pipes | drums

The image displays a musical score for a piece titled "Cruilive". The score is written for a single melodic line on a treble clef staff. It begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a common time signature (C). The music is characterized by a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together. The score is divided into two sections: the first section is marked with a lowercase 's' and the second with a lowercase 'D'. The piece concludes with a double bar line. The notation includes various note values, rests, and phrasing slurs.

pipes | drums

DD



Colin Campbell's score has a number of points of interest. There is an obvious omission in line three of the doubling of the ground, namely "hinadin hodin dro," and this has been made good in the staff notation score. In the ground and its doubling the majority of bars begin on A, while elsewhere in the tune the first note is E. It is possible that, in accordance with the other early written versions, Colin Campbell may have intended an E introductory note on such figures. We know from another very early source, Joseph MacDonald's *Compleat Theory of the Scots Highland Bagpipe* (c. 1760) that these introductory movements were then at the disposal of the player, and that nobody could be considered a finished player who did not know where and when to place them. It seems possible, therefore, that Colin Campbell may have intended something like the following in the ground and the doubling of the ground in this tune:

Nether Lorn 'Blind Piper's Obstinacy' possible intended timing of ground



Angus MacKay sets the tune as follows:

pipes | drums

Crosanachs, an Doilly.

The Blind Pipers Abstinence

Composed by
Himself

John Hall MacKay
General

95

var. 1st

var. 2nd

var. 3rd

pipes | drums

96

Bran - lie ath

Doubling

Trebling

D. G. Thema

Note - variation 3rd and Trebling are played very lively

Angus MacKay's setting is on very similar lines to Colin Campbell's in construction, with a ground, followed by what is essentially a doubling of the ground (which Angus calls 'Var. 1st'), two siubhal variations as opposed to Colin's three, and three crunluath variations very much on similar lines to the Nether Lorn text. MacKay begins with a version of Colin's doubling of the ground then proceeds to something very like Colin's first motion; a variation second which does not exactly match anything in Colin, a third variation which follows the tone row of Colin's Cruive trebling; then a crunluath singling, doubling and trebling, with an unusual instruction to repeat the ground at the end of the singling before proceeding to the doubling and trebling of the crunluath. This is probably a slip, because the musical material and the development hardly seems different enough to justify repeating the ground at this point. The ground is repeated at end of crunluath variations in Angus's normal fashion. The tune ends with the comment "Note—Variation 3rd and Trebling are played very lively."

Colin Cameron broadly follows Angus MacKay although with one or two individual touches of style as in the penultimate bar of the ground where he plays even quavers to follow the rhythmical pattern elsewhere in the ground, rather than MacKay's dotted and cut quaver/semi-quaver style:

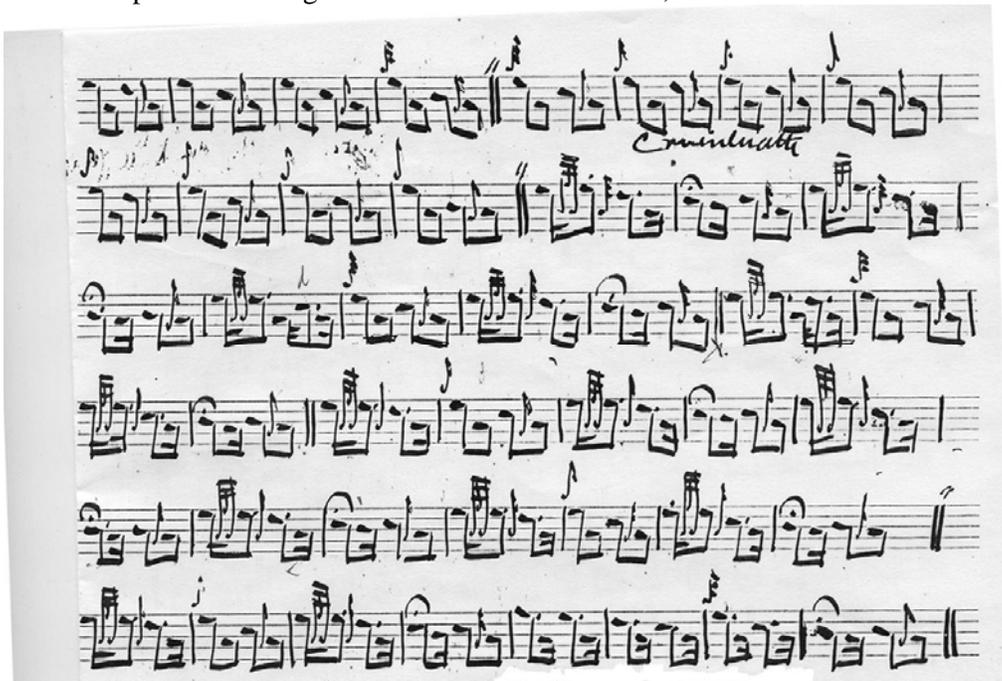


and so on.

Since Colin Cameron tended to be precise about note values, it may well be that he intended the even quavers to be played as such, and it certainly produces an interesting effect. He directs that the ground be repeated at the end of the third variation before the crunluath singling is introduced. Colin's source is obviously MacKay or a transcript of MacKay. He concludes with a note on tempo which follows Angus's wording exactly, so except for a small editorial intervention in the ground and moving Angus's obviously misplaced D. C. mark he does not add much to the tune stylistically.

D. S. MacDonald adds nothing to MacKay stylistically, and except for introducing a small error in the ground (a missing C crotchet at the end of the penultimate bar) his score faithfully follows his original. He reproduces Angus's note on tempo and does not move the misplaced D. C. mark at the end of the crunluath singling. This score is not reproduced here.

John MacDougall Gillies follows MacKay in the general development and timing of the tune, but he has an interesting way of notating the crunluath singling trying various devices to show a brisk up-cut following the edre movement on the E, as follows:



Gillies in a note attributes the piece to John Dall MacKay. He does not repeat the ground within the tune.

The version in the **McLennan** papers is a mere sketch, and is not reproduced here.

C. S. Thomason's setting is based on Angus MacKay's MS, but in the third variation he interprets MacKay's even quavers as forming an intended dotted quaver/semi quaver sequence, which rhythmical pattern reappears again in the second and third crunluath variations. Those uncomfortable with Thomason's abbreviated system of notation may refer to **David Glen's** transcript of Thomason's score which follows:

pipes | drums

The Blind Piper's Obstinacy. by John Dall Mackay
from *best nos.* and D. McEwen

Ulnar

var. 1st (Sintbal)

var 2.

pipes | drums

246

very lively.

var 3.

1st time Only

var 4th

var 5

The image shows a handwritten musical score for pipes and drums. It consists of five variations of a melody, each written on a single staff. The time signature is 2/4. The first variation is marked 'p' (piano) and 'very lively.'. The second variation is marked 'f' (forte) and '1st time Only'. The third variation is marked 'w' (weak) and 'f'. The fourth variation is marked 'w' and 'f'. The fifth variation is marked 'w' and 'f'. The score is written in a clear, legible hand.



The **Piobaireachd Society first series** score follows Angus MacKay with some minor changes to pointing. This is the setting later reproduced, except in one or two trivial details, in the third volume of the *Piobaireachd Society Collection* (second series) edited by Archibald Campbell whose notes refer to numerous manuscript and oral settings, but make no reference to what was probably his real source, namely the Society's first series volume 5. Although claiming to reproduce the Nether Lorn canntaireachd setting "verbatim," Archibald Campbell silently removes the frequent diacritical marks which in the original had indicated how several of the conventional movements were timed, important here because of the inventive way in which Colin Mór varied 'up cut' with 'down cut' figures as he progressed through the variations.

G. F. Ross's score approaches the timing of the tune in a similar way to Thomason and Glen, and it is not reproduced here.

Commentary:

There are basically three ways of doing this tune: Colin Campbell's, Angus MacKay's, and the group of later scores including David Glen, General Thomason and G. F. Ross's which depend on interpreting MacKay's even quaver figures as dotted quaver/semi-quaver rather than semi-quaver/dotted-quaver. The "down cut" style of the earlier scores contrasts interestingly with the rather sing-song quality of the "later" interpretations.

In an article in the *Oban Times* in 1904, Dr. Charles Bannatyne reported on an intriguing early piobaireachd MS apparently connected to John Dall MacKay which was then in the possession of Lt. John McLennan, G. S. McLennan's father and teacher:

THE JOHN DALL MACKAY MSS.

Lieut. MacLennan, of the Edinburgh City Police, demonstrated to the writer the form of the tunes in a collection of piobaireachd which belonged to the celebrated Gairloch piper. It was written by William Ross, the poet, who was MacKay's nephew. The tunes are written on a

pipes | drums

nine line stave, each line representing a note of the chanter. Each tune is circumflexed into beats and phrases, and so the rhythm and time are at once apparent, while accent is indicated by naming the beats according to the type, such as "leum-lugh," "da-lugh," "tri-lugh," etc. Without doubt the tunes have been translated from some form of Canntaireachd where the words, spacing and punctuation give time, tune and accent. John Dall MacKay was one of the greatest pupils the Borerraig School ever held. Among the greatest pipers he and Charles MacArthur, composer of "Abercairney's Salute," seem to be nearer in ability to the MacCruimens than any others. So jealous were the MacCruimens of Dall MacKay that they attempted to destroy him. Blind, as the prefix "dall" signifies, he was a man of great natural ability and preternatural acuteness, and in a short residence at Borerraig he mastered all the jealously-guarded secrets, which were to the MacCruimens a valuable hereditary monopoly. To preserve these secrets inviolate, they threw MacKay over a rock near Borerraig, but he escaped unhurt, and lived to a ripe old age. He was the friend and teacher of Lieut. MacLennan's grandfather. Mr. MacLennan's father was also a piper and so his knowledge of piobaireachd may be said to be a legacy from the MacCruimen School, from his forebears through John Dall MacKay, one of its greatest pupils. This great piper was wont to exclaim in his old age- "It is not piobaireachd that is played now-a-days, as I knew it in my youth, but the buzzing monotones of a horn, like the lowing of cattle." MacKay seemed to have fathomed the whole teaching scheme of the MacCruimens, and doubtless they feared the opposition of a rival institution, with the blind piper of Gairloch at its head. The last MacCruimen who held the hereditary office of piper to "The MacLeod" was "Eoin Dhu," from whom Captain Neil MacLeod, Gesto, took down the tunes in the system we are now discussing. John MacCruimen, 'the Dark John' in question, died in 1829, and so was contemporary with Angus Mackay of pibroch-collecting fame; but, nevertheless, Campbell of Islay states that Angus knew nothing of Cainntaireachd. Nor did he know of John MacCruimen, for he states in his notes that John died in 1822. Up till a few years ago there were MacCruimens in Skye of the old stock" ("Highland Music and Canntaireachd" Part 1V, from Charles Bannatyne, *Oban Times*, 20/02/1904, p.3).

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