

Farewell to the Laird of Islay (2)

There are settings of this tune in the following MS sources:

- **Angus MacKay**, in the so-called "Kintarbert MS," ff.105-107;
- **Duncan Campbell of Foss's** MS, ff.127-131;
- **Donald MacKay's** "Ballindalloch MS," f.22;
- **David Glen's** MS, ff.78-80;

and in the following published source:

- **C. S. Thomason**, *Ceol Mor*, p.254.

**Angus MacKay** sets the tune as follows:

*Noraidh le Sighbanna Mhòr* 11.5  
*March to the Laird of Selkirk*  
composed by  
*W.D.*  
1840

The image shows a handwritten musical score for a pipe and drum tune. It consists of ten staves of music. The first staff is a title line with the text: "Noraidh le Sighbanna Mhòr" (numbered 11.5), "March to the Laird of Selkirk", "composed by W.D.", and "1840". The music begins on the second staff with a treble clef, a common time signature (C), and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notation is dense, featuring many sixteenth and thirty-second notes, characteristic of a fast-paced march. There are several dynamic markings such as "pizz." and "2nd." throughout the piece. The score ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

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Handwritten musical score for a pipe and drum piece. The score consists of 12 staves of music. The notation includes various rhythmic values, accidentals, and dynamic markings. Key annotations include:  
- *Shuffling of base & 2.* (written below the second staff)  
- *pat. 2.2.* (written below the fifth staff)  
- *2.6.* (written above the eleventh staff)  
- *Concise length.* (written below the eleventh staff)  
The music is written in a single system across the staves, with some phrasing indicated by slurs and breath marks.

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The image shows a handwritten musical score for a Piobaireachd. It consists of ten staves of music, each with a treble clef and a common time signature. The notation is complex, featuring many beamed eighth and sixteenth notes, typical of the genre. There are various performance markings such as accents, slurs, and dynamic markings like 'p' and 'f'. A handwritten note 'Even-length a march.' is written below the fifth staff. The score concludes with a double bar line and the initials 'D.C.' written above the final staff.

There should probably be a C crotchet at the end of the second bar of the second line of the ground to echo the C in corresponding places throughout the variations and square the phrasal symmetry of the tune, but none of the sources with a direct connection to the composer, Angus MacKay, has got it, including **Duncan Campbell of Foss**. It is interesting that Archibald Campbell, who edited the tune for the Piobaireachd Society, should give as his source the MS of Duncan Campbell of Foss, since the Society version does have the C (as

well as numerous silent changes to note values. See *Piobaireachd Society's Collection*, second series, ix 267). Duncan Campbell set the tune as follows:

*Soraidh do Sighcurna Ma*

*Farewell to the Laird of Slay - 1840*

1st time

2nd time

15th time

The image displays a handwritten musical score for pipes and drums, consisting of four staves. The notation is dense and includes various rhythmic values, such as eighth and sixteenth notes, along with rests and beams. Handwritten annotations in cursive are present: "Var - 2nd" is written above the first staff, and "2nd - 1st" is written above the second staff. The score concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots on the fourth staff.

*Doubling of Var 2nd*

1st tom

2nd tom

Var 2nd

2nd tom

Cry with

1st tom

The image displays a handwritten musical score for pipes and drums. It consists of approximately 15 staves of music. The notation includes various note values, rests, and dynamic markings. Key annotations include 'Doubling of Var 2nd' at the top, '1st tom' and '2nd tom' indicating specific drum parts, and 'Cry with' marking a section of the score. The handwriting is in black ink on a white background.

The image shows a handwritten musical score for pipes and drums. It consists of several systems of staves. The first system is marked '2nd time' and is enclosed in a dashed-line box. The second system is marked 'Cran-luath a. much'. The third system is marked '1st time' and is also enclosed in a dashed-line box. The fourth system is marked '2nd time' and is enclosed in a dashed-line box. The score is written in a traditional notation style with notes and rests on a five-line staff.

**Donald MacKay's** MS is transcribed from MacKay's MS, but interestingly points the taorluath "down" (as opposed to Angus MacKay and Duncan Campbell's even quavers with their implied "up" timing):

*Januall to the Laird of Slay composed by Angus MacKay 1840*

*1st Time*

*2nd Time*

*Part 1st*

*1st Time*

*2nd Time*

*1st Time*

*2nd Time*

*Part 2*

*1st Time*

*2nd Time*

*3rd Time*

*4th Time*

*Double of Part 2*

*1st Time*

*2nd*

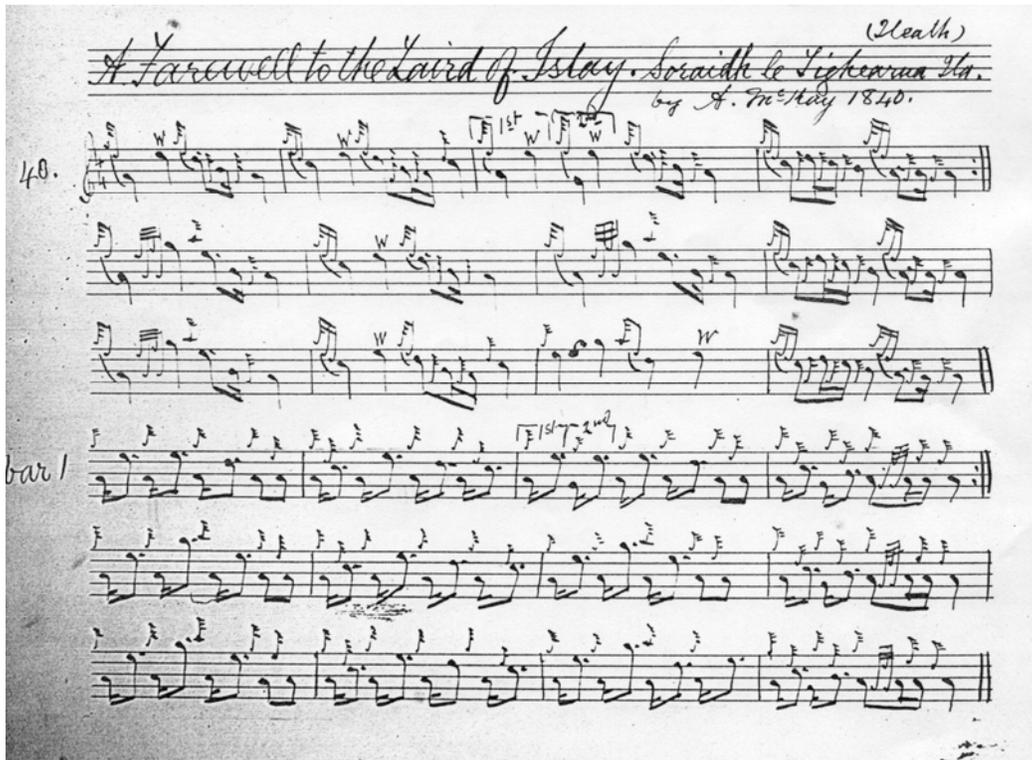
*3rd*

*4th*

*Mr. Lapan*

*The Cunnluath can be taken from Bar 3 & also Cunnluath a...*

David Glen sets the tune in his characteristic style:



And so on. The absence of the C in the second line of the ground was first identified by **C. S. Thomason** and reinstated by him in *Ceol Mor*.

Some may feel that this otherwise most attractive tune eventually rather outstays its welcome; it is developed a little beyond its potential, a thing which sometimes happens with the MacKays. In addition, the MacKay settings, if we can call them that, seem a bit lop-sided, with a taorluath breabach (singling and doubling) plus a taorluath duinte, followed by a crunluath duinte plus a mach. If the development were symmetrical, one would expect the pattern to be crunluath breabach (singling and doubling) followed by a crunluath duinte. At any rate, C. S. Thomason proceeded to something like this conclusion, citing Angus MacKay, Donald MacKay and Colin Cameron as his sources for the tune:

FAREWELL TO THE LAIRD OF ISLAY  
Angus MacKay 1840.

Since we have settings from both the Mackays and neither includes the crunluath breabach this may be a Cameron family styling.

### Commentary

Perhaps the simplest thing to do would be to develop the tune either to a duinte or a breabach conclusion, but not both. One could perhaps drop the duinte taorluath and crunluath variations—so that the tune would end taorluath breabach singling and doubling/crunluath breabach singling and doubling. But this option is not available to the modern player in competitive circumstances. Indeed it is recorded that one year at Oban, Sheriff J. P. Grant of Rothiemurchus relegated his own teacher John MacDonald of Inverness (although the Sheriff himself was little more than a beginner as a player) to fourth place in a competition MacDonald had otherwise clearly won, for weeding out what he considered a redundant variation in "The MacKay's Banner," rather than playing the official score as written.

The tune is said to have been written by Angus MacKay for his employer Walter Campbell of Shawfield and Islay, one of a number of piper-employing *arriviste* lairds who were converting business fortunes into Highland estates. The Shawfield family is a very interesting one: it was from it that the great folklorist J. F. Campbell of Islay sprang. Indeed the piper "nurse" by whom J. F. had been reared was another distinguished player, John Campbell of the Nether Lorn family who figured prominently in the Edinburgh competitions in the second decade of the nineteenth century. We get an intriguing little sketch of him in Lady Eleanor Campbell's diary recording an incident in January 1830 in which the family had been beguiling a rainy afternoon looking for the missing Shawfield pearls, and found an old deed box which it was thought might contain them: "...on his heels beside the box was John Campbell the piper in his Kilt, his good natured pock marked face lighted up with curiosity and eagerness. At last with a wrench and cheer the lid rose and there were only layers of yellow papers. Still hoping for the pearls or for a snuff box at least, layer after layer was unpacked and tossed on the floor. No one heeded the dusty old papers. At last his voice

cracked with keeness the piper shouted and a rough tin with a parchment dangling to it was handed to the light of day... 'Huch' said the Piper 'it's only a seal. But it's a very queer one.' The box contained nothing but papers and we were all grievously disappointed." (Freda Ramsay, *The Day Book of Daniel Campbell of Shawfield, 1767 with relevant papers concerning the Estate of Islay*, Aberdeen: AUP, 1991, pp.101-2)

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