

The MacKay's Banner this is part of a 'family' of tunes, and has close melodic links with 'The Battle of the Pass of Crieff', as shown by the interchangeability of titles in this group. The earliest MS source, the Nether Lorn (i, 22-4), shows this affinity quite clearly, giving the 'Pass of Crieff' tune under the title 'Bhratich Bhan' —[The White Banner]. The title in Donald MacDonald's MS (ff.201-6) is 'The White Flag', but this refers to the tune nowadays regarded as a separate one called 'MacKay's Banner'. Peter Reid's title for this latter tune is 'Piobaireachd na Braitche Baine Chlan Aodh The Mackays White Flag' (f.34). It is clear from the MS, however, that Reid had originally titled the tune 'The Stewarts Salute', but this is scored out—the slip possibly being caused by the fact that—as those familiar with the Jacobite movement will be aware—the Stewarts also had a white banner.

The Nether Lorn develops the tune as follows:

- 1st. Hiharinodin hiodaro,do,ho Twice Over himhinhodin hiodrodintro,
- 2d. Hiharinodin hiodaro,do,ho himhinhodin hiodrodinodin himhinhodin hiodrodintro
- 3d. Hiharinodin hiodaro,do,ho himhin,drehodin hiodrodintro

- D 1st. Hiharinodin hiodaro,do,ho Twice Over himhin hodin Ievohohio
- 2d. Hiharinodin hiodaro,do,ho himhin hodin Ievohoeo himhin hodin Ievohohio
- 3d. Hiharinodin hiodaro,do,ho himhin hodin Ievohohio

- DD 1st. Hiharinodin hiodarohodin, Twice Over himhin hodin hiodrodinodin
- 2d. Hiharinodin hiodarohodin, himhinodin, hiodrodinodin Twice Over
- 3d. Hiharinodin hiodarohodin himhin hodin hiodrodinodin

S the first Motion

- 1st. Hinen hioen hoeohoen, Twice Over, himen, hoen hioehioen [etc.]

- D 1st. Hinen hioen hoen hoen Twice Over himen hoen hioen hioen [etc]

- DD. 1st. Hinen hiohio hoho hoho Twice Over, himen hoho hiohio [etc]

S Taolive

- 1st. Hindarid hiodarid hoaoehodin Twice Over himdarid hodarid hioaoeo hiodin [etc]

- D 1st. Hindarid hiodarid hoaoehodarid Twice Over himdarid hodarid hioaoeo hiodarid [etc]

- DD 1st. Hindarid hiodarid hodarid hodarid Twice Over himdarid hodarid hiodarid hiodarid [etc]

- DDD 1st. Hindarid hiodarid hiodarid hodarid three times Twice Over himdarid hodarid hodarid hiodarid three times

- 2d. Hindarid hiodarid hiodarid hodarid three times himdarid hodarid

hodarid hiodarid, three times Twice Over
3d. Hindarid hiodarid hiodarid hodarid three times
himdarid hodarid [hodarid] hiodarid three times

There follows a crunluath (singling, doubling, trebling, quadrupling) on the pattern of the taorluath above, including an a mach which follows the extravagant taorluath quadrupling above. The expansiveness of this latter movement is echoed elsewhere in Colin Mor Campbell's settings where certain figures are picked up and elaborated, unexpectedly increasing the range or length of the tone row. For further examples, see his treatment of 'The Rout of Glenfruin' (i, 27-9) and 'The Blind Piper's Obstinacy' (ii, 166-8, with the title 'Cor beg mhic Leain').

The A phrase of Donald MacDonald's 'White Flag' is very close to the version in the Nether Lorn, thereafter the melodies diverge:

'The White Flag', ground. Donald MacDonald's MS (ff.201-6)

'The White Flag', Thumb Variation, lines 1-2, Donald MacDonald's MS (ff.201-6)

'The White Flag', Thumb Variation Doubling, line 1, Donald MacDonald's MS (ff.201-6)

'The White Flag', siubhal singling, line 1-2, Donald MacDonald's MS (ff.201-6)

Two staves of musical notation in 2/4 time. The first staff contains the first two lines of the melody, and the second staff continues the melody with an 'Etc.' marking at the end.

'The White Flag', siubhal doubling, line 1-2, Donald MacDonald's MS (ff.201-6)

Two staves of musical notation in 2/4 time. The first staff contains the first two lines of the melody, and the second staff continues the melody with an 'Etc.' marking at the end.

'The White Flag', taorluath singling, line 1, Donald MacDonald's MS (ff.201-6)

One staff of musical notation in 6/8 time. The staff contains the first line of the melody, with an 'Etc.' marking in the middle.

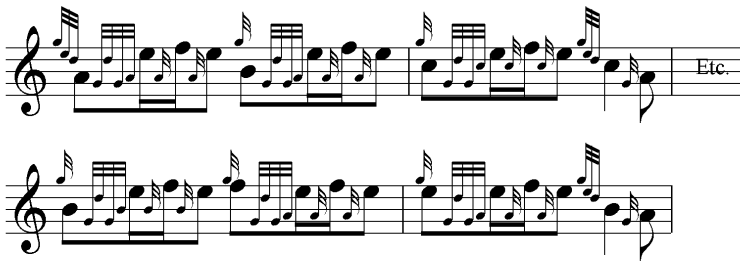
'The White Flag', taorluath doubling, line 1, Donald MacDonald's MS (ff.201-6)

One staff of musical notation in 6/8 time. The staff contains the first line of the melody, with an 'Etc.' marking at the end.

'The White Flag', taorluath trebling, line 1, Donald MacDonald's MS (ff.201-6)

One staff of musical notation in 6/8 time. The staff contains the first line of the melody, with an 'Etc.' marking in the middle.

'The White Flag, crunluath singling, line 1, Donald MacDonald's MS (ff.201-6)



'The White Flag', crunluath doubling, line 1, Donald MacDonald's MS (ff.201-6)



'The White Flag', crunluath trebling, line 1, Donald MacDonald's MS (ff.201-6)



MacDonald's neat and shapely arrangement shows many features typical of his style, including frequent use of reflexive cuttings in the ground, varied timings of double echo beats (three different styles in the ground alone), and the emphasis on the first pulse of a mach beats. MacDonald here times the introductory gesture on A as two even quavers followed by an A crotchet, perhaps implying a fairly staccato effect. This forms an interesting contrast to the style of Peter Reid, who in general tends to accentuate the first quaver of his echo beat groups on A, B and E. Reid introduces interesting rhythmical diversity in his thumb variation as well, in a style which is much less square than MacDonald and may possibly be preferred. The absence of cadencing also gives Reid's phrase endings a pleasantly uncluttered effect:

'The MacKay's White Flag', Peter Reid's MS (f.34)

A musical score for 'The MacKay's White Flag' consisting of four staves. The notation is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a 3/4 time signature. The music features a complex, rhythmic melody with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes, characteristic of Piobaireachd. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

'The MacKay's White Flag', First Variation, Peter Reid's MS (f.34)

A musical score for the first variation of 'The MacKay's White Flag', consisting of four staves. The notation is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a 3/4 time signature. This variation maintains the complex rhythmic structure of the original but with some melodic alterations. It concludes with a double bar line.

'The MacKays White Flag', doubling of 1st Variation, Peter Reid's MS (f.34)

A musical score for the doubling of the first variation of 'The MacKay's White Flag', consisting of a single staff. The notation is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a 3/4 time signature. It features a continuous, intricate melodic line that repeats the variation's pattern. The piece ends with the word 'Etc.' written at the end of the staff.

Thereafter the tune appears to be envisaged developing in accordance with the pattern illustrated by MacDonald. Reid's score stops at the end of the siubhal singling which establishes the pattern for the later variations with the words 'Doubling of 2d Variation, then, Taorluidh, Creanluidh &c.'

The earliest of the published settings is that of Angus MacKay in *Ancient Piobaireachd* (pp.119-121). The following examples give an idea of his characteristic timings:

'The Mackay's Banner', ground, Angus MacKay, *Ancient Piobaireachd*, pp.(119-21)

The musical notation for the ground of 'The Mackay's Banner' is presented in four staves. It is written in treble clef with a 6/8 time signature. The melody consists of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some triplets and slurs. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

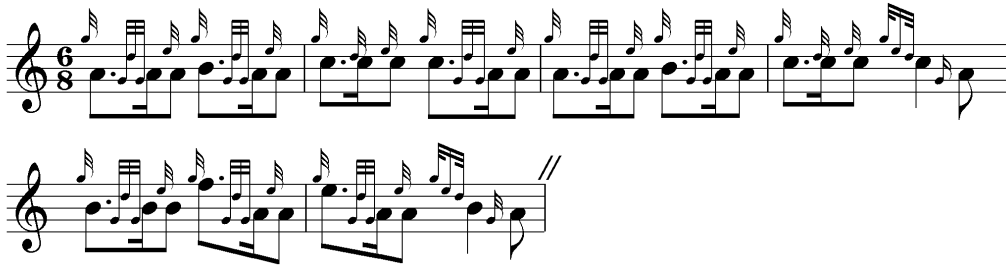
'The Mackay's Banner', thumb variation singling, line 1, Angus MacKay's *Ancient Piobaireachd*, (pp.119-21)

The musical notation for the thumb variation singling of 'The Mackay's Banner' is presented in two staves. It is written in treble clef with a 6/8 time signature. The melody is similar to the ground but includes some variations in note values and slurs. The piece concludes with a double bar line and the word 'Etc.' written below the staff.

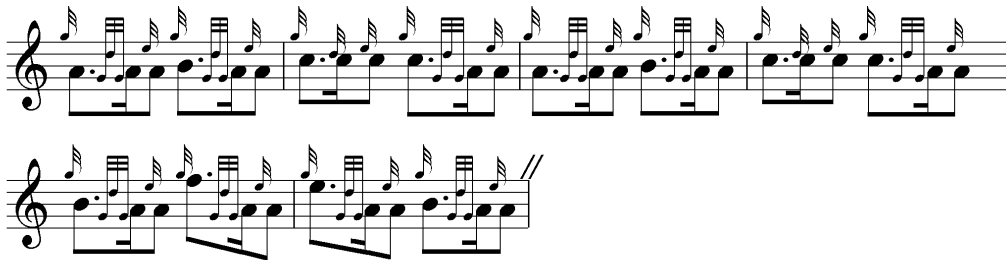
'The Mackay's Banner', thumb variation doubling, line 1, Angus MacKay's *Ancient Piobaireachd*, (pp.119-21)

The musical notation for the thumb variation doubling of 'The Mackay's Banner' is presented in one staff. It is written in treble clef with a 2/4 time signature. The melody is a variation of the ground, featuring a different rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

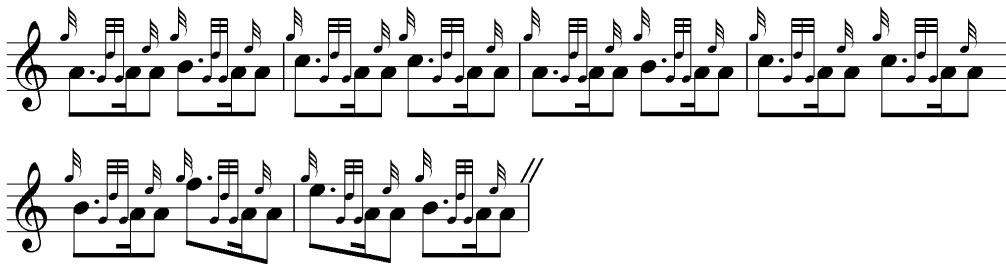
'The Mackay's Banner', taorluath singling, line 1, Angus MacKay's Ancient Piobaireachd, (pp.119-21)



'The Mackay's Banner', taorluath doubling, line 1, Angus MacKay's Ancient Piobaireachd, (pp.119-121)



'The Mackay's Banner', taorluath trebling, line 1, Angus MacKay's Ancient Piobaireachd, (pp.119-121)



'The Mackay's Banner', crunluath singling, line 1, Angus MacKay, Ancient Piobaireachd, (pp.119-121)



The crunluath doubling and trebling follow the pattern of the taorluath variations. MacKay does not have a siubhal.

Of the later printed settings, MacPhee (ii, 20-22) reflects elements of both MacDonald and Reid in the ground and thumb variation:

'The Mackay's Banner', ground, line 1, Donald MacPhee, Collection of Piobaireachd, (ii, 20-22)



'The Mackay's Banner', thumb variation singling, line 1, MacPhee, Collection of Piobaireachd, (pp.20-22)



'The Mackay's Banner', thumb variation doubling, line 1, MacPhee, Collection of Piobaireachd, (pp.20-22)



From the taorluath onwards the tune proceeds in a manner broadly similar to MacKay, except in the treblings, thus:

'The Mackay's Banner', taorluath trebling, line 1, MacPhee, Collection of Piobaireachd, (pp.20-22)



C. S. Thomason (*Ceol Mor* p.121) cites MacDonald's MS and Donald MacKay (the younger), but the score is virtually identical with that in Angus MacKay's *Ancient Piobaireachd*, until the taorluath and crunluath variations, where Thomason follows MacDonald, albeit with MacKay-style pointing of the a mach movements.

The following note on the tune by John MacKay in the *Celtic Monthly*, is transcribed in Thomason's 'Ceol Mor Legends':

‘A’ Bhratach Bhan (The white banner)

Little is known regarding the ancient banner of the MacKays. All that the clan History tells us on the subject is that Robert MacKay son of Neil of Achness (the chieftain who was killed in Thurso in 1649), was the custodian of the colours; that this Robert had a son Neil to whom the colours descended; that Neil in his turn, had a son Robert, who had the flag and that after him his son Hugh had the custody of it.

An old man in Thurso, Hugh MacKay, commonly known as Hugh “Hamar”, had the banner in his keeping for many years. It came to him in this way: Hugh MacKay, son of the second Robert above mentioned, had no family. On his death the flag was handed to his brother Angus; and this Angus left it to his son, the Hugh “Hamar” just referred to. On the death of Hugh about 10 years ago, Alexander, county assessor, Thurso, got the flag and in his possession it still remains. Whether Mr. MacKay is of the same family as Hugh, I do not know; but it seems only natural that the old banner should be in the keeping of a descendent of Neil the chieftain, or of the head of the Abrach family for the time being...

Accompanied by a friend, I called upon Hugh “Hamar” in 1875... in order to see the flag...and certainly it is a venerable and ancient looking relic. It seemed to be made of knitted silk, and was quite tattered; but whether it had originally been white, I could not tell, as through age and use it had become perfectly grey.

A figure in the centre was so faded and worn that it was difficult to guess what it was intended to represent; and the motto was illegible. Hugh said he believed the figure was a stag, though he was not sure; but he was certain as to the motto, which was “Bidh treun, Bidh treun” (Be valiant, be valiant,) because his father had often told him so...’ (ff. 182 – 191)

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