

## The Blind Piper's Obstinacy

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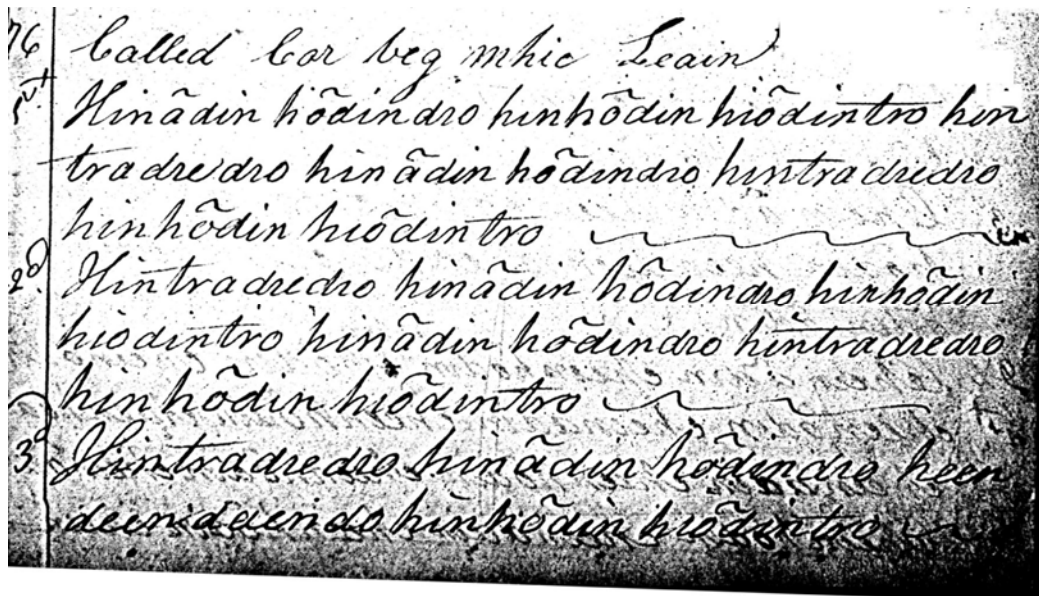
There are settings of this tune in the following manuscripts:

- **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:



167

1. *Hinādin hōdindro hin hōdin hio hōdintro*  
*hindaen deendo hinādin hōdindro hindaen*  
*deendo hin hōdin oḍintro* ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

2. *Hindaen deendo hinādin hōdindro hin hō*  
*din oḍintro hinādin hōdindro hindaen*  
*deendo hin hōdin oḍintro* ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

3. *Hindaen deendo heen deen daendo hin*  
*hōdin oḍintro* ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

4. *First Motion* ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

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

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

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

4. *Cheenādin hōdin hōdin cheen hōdin oḍin*  
*oḍin cheenādin deen hōdin cheenādin hō*  
*ādin hōdin cheenādin deen hōdin cheen hō*  
*ādin oḍin oḍin* ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

2. *Cheenādin deen hōdin cheenādin hōdin*  
*hōdin cheen hōdin oḍin oḍin cheenādin*  
*hōdin hōdin cheenādin deen hōdin cheen*  
*hōdin oḍin oḍin* ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

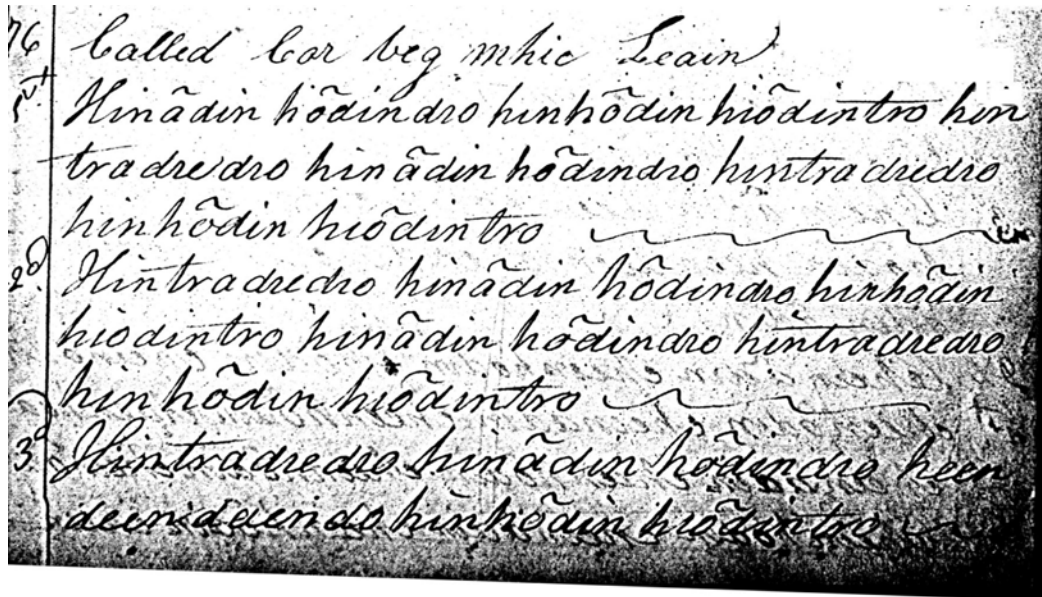
3. *Cheenādin deen hōdin cheenādin hōdin*  
*hōdin heen deen daendo cheen hōdin*  
*ādin oḍin* ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

4. *Cheenādin cheen hōdin cheen hōdin cheen oḍin*  
*cheen hōdin cheenādin cheen hōdin cheen hōdin*  
*cheenādin cheen hōdin cheen hōdin cheen oḍin*  
*cheen hōdin cheenādin cheen hōdin cheen*



# pipes | drums

168  
hōdin cheenōdin cheenōdin cheenōdin  
en hōdin cheenādin cheenōdin cheenōdin  
cheenōdin  
1. Lehen hōdin cheenādin cheen hōdin cheen  
hōdin cheenādin cheen hōdin cheen hōdin  
cheenōdin  
2. *Crulive*  
Dreen daen doen doen dreendaen doen oen oen  
dreen daen deen doen dreendaen doen doen  
daen deen doen dreendaen oen oen  
3. Dreen daen deen doen dreendaen doen doen  
heen deen daen doen dreendaen oen oen  
4. Dreen ādin hōdin hōdin dreendaen hōdin odin odin  
dreen ādin deen hōdin dreendaen hōdin hōdin  
dreen ādin deen hōdin dreendaen hōdin odin odin  
5. Dreen ādin deen hōdin dreendaen hōdin hōdin  
dreen hōdin odin odin dreendaen hōdin hōdin  
dreen ādin deen hōdin dreendaen hōdin odin odin  
6. Dreen ādin deen hōdin dreendaen hōdin hōdin  
heen deen daendo dreendaen hōdin odin odin  
7. Dreen odin dreendaen hōdin dreendaen hōdin odin  
dreen hōdin dreendaen hōdin dreendaen hōdin  
dreen ādin dreendaen hōdin dreendaen hōdin  
8. Dreen hōdin dreendaen hōdin dreendaen hōdin  
dreen odin dreendaen hōdin dreendaen hōdin  
dreenādin dreendaen hōdin dreendaen hōdin  
9. Dreen hōdin dreendaen hōdin dreendaen hōdin  
dreen ādin dreendaen hōdin dreendaen hōdin



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

'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 written in 4/4 time and consists of two systems, each with four staves. The first system is marked with a 'D' and the second with an 'S' and 'ffirst Motion'. The notation includes various musical symbols such as treble clefs, time signatures, and note values, along with specific pipe notation symbols like 'x' and 'y' for grace notes and 'f' for fairs.

# pipes | drums

The image displays a musical score for a piece titled "What are the neighbours up to?". The score is written for pipes and drums, featuring a complex, rhythmic melody. It is organized into two main systems, each containing five staves. The first system is marked with a 'D' (Drum) and the second with a 'DD' (Double Drum). The notation includes various note values, rests, and dynamic markings, all set against a background of a repeating rhythmic pattern. The score is presented in a clear, professional layout, suitable for a printed music book.



# pipes | drums

The image displays a musical score for the tune "What are the neighbours up to?". It begins with a single staff of music. Below this, there are two systems of six staves each. The first system is labeled with a large 'S' and the word 'Cruilive'. The second system is labeled with a large 'D'. Each staff in these systems contains a complex, rhythmic melody with many beamed notes and rests, characteristic of a pipe and drum tune. The notation is in treble clef.



**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:



*Crusanachd an Doilly.*

*The Blind Piper's Absinthe*

*Composed by*

*himself*

*John Ball MacKay*

*General*

95

*var. 1st*

*var. 2nd*

*var. 3rd*

**pipes | drums**

96

The Rose Tree  
The Rose Tree  
The Rose Tree

D.C.  
Doubbling

D.C.  
Trebling

D.C. Thomas

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. 1<sup>st</sup>'), 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 Crulive 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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:



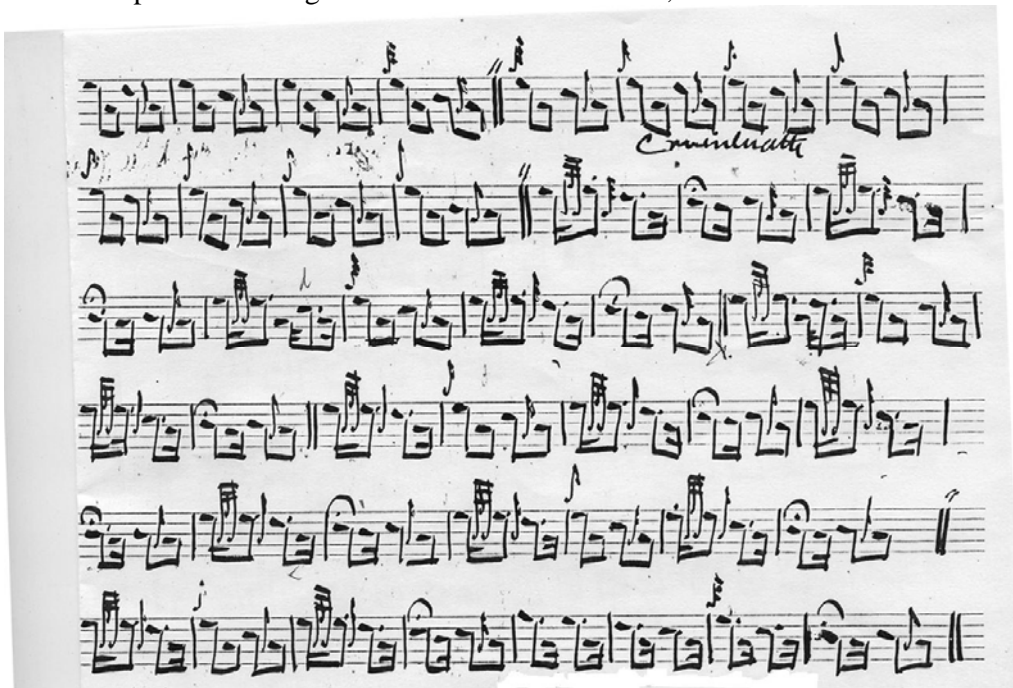
and so on.

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:

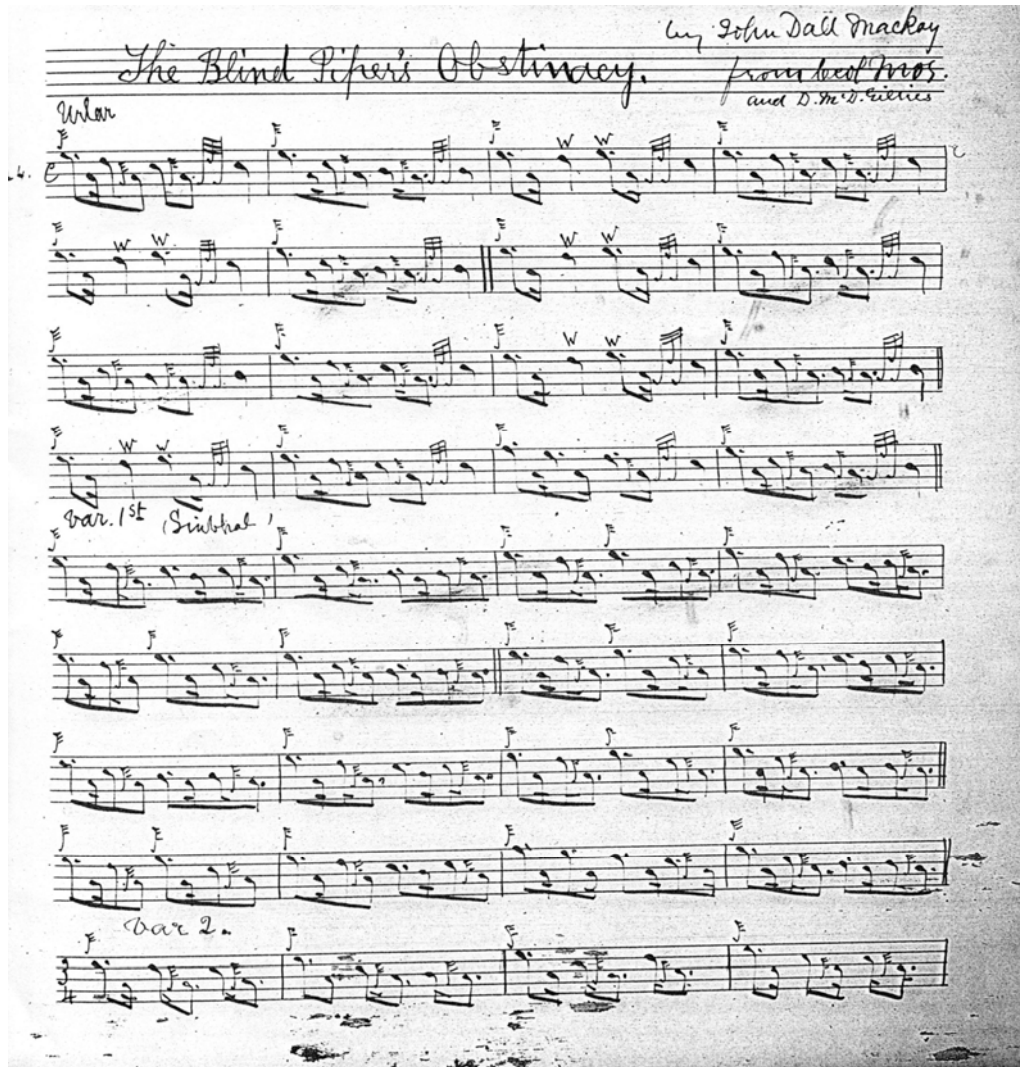


Gillies in a note attributes the piece to John Dall MacKay. He does not repeat the ground within the tune.

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

246

Very Slowly.

var 3.

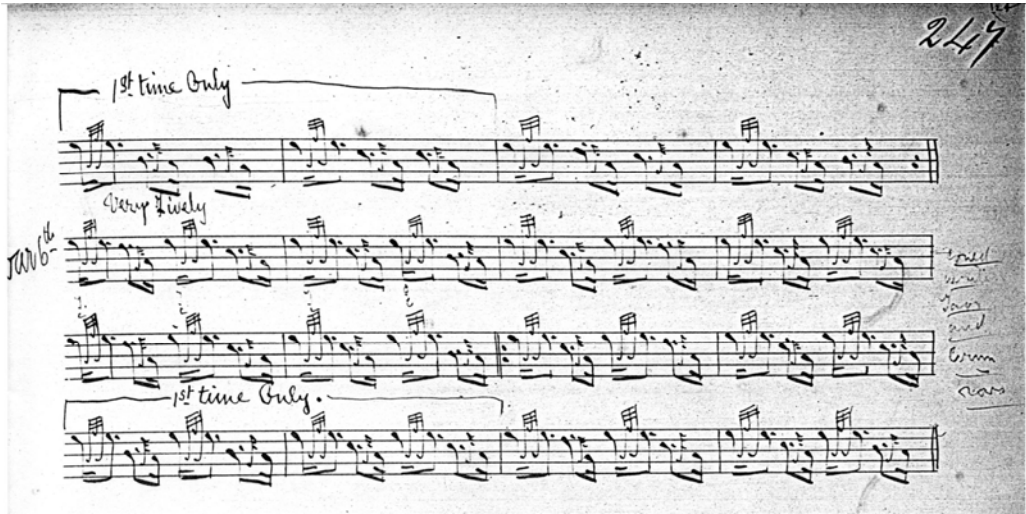
1st time Only

var 4<sup>th</sup>

2nd time

var 5

3rd time



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



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 Boreraig 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 Boreraig 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 Boreraig, 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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