

## Glengarry's March (2)

---

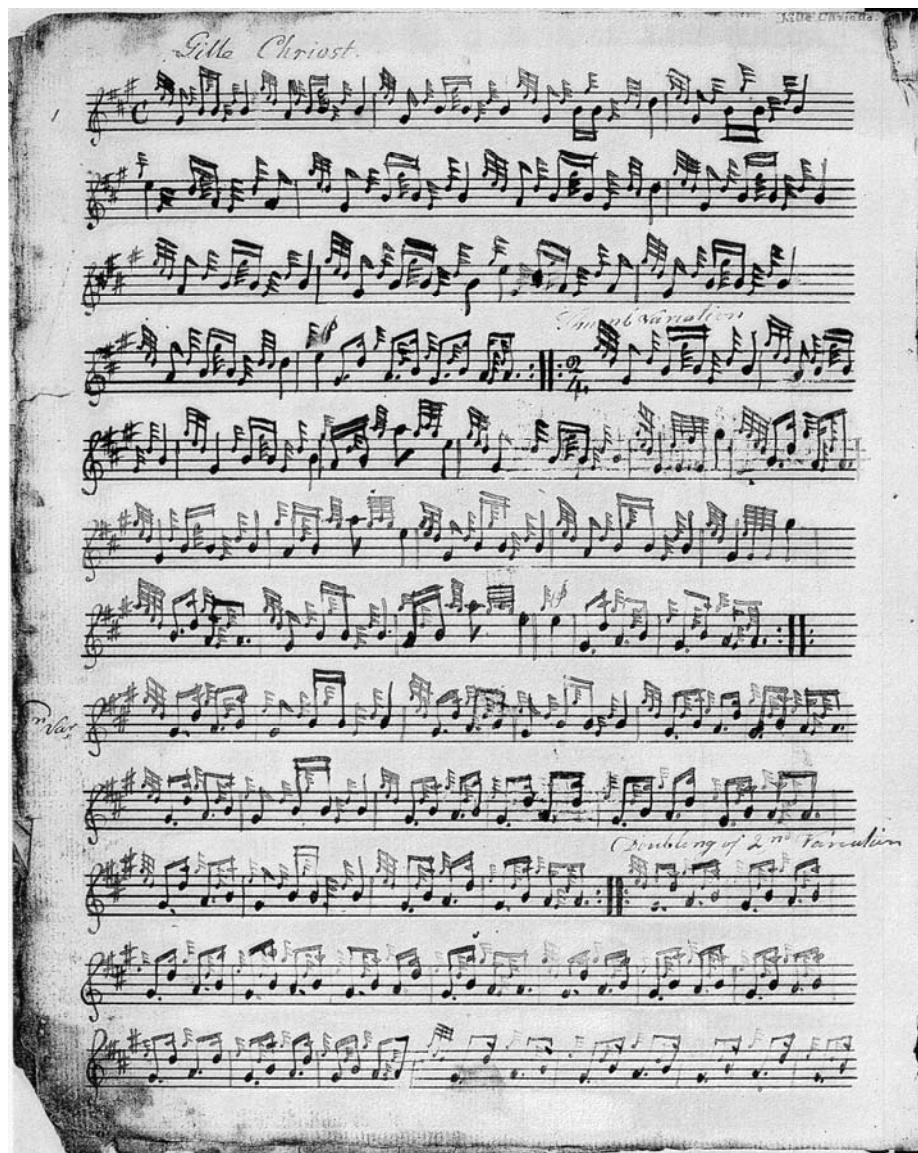
There are settings of this tune in the following manuscript sources:

- **Hannay/McAuslan** MS, ff.2-4;
- **Angus MacKay's** MS, i, 169-170;
- **D. S. MacDonald's** MS, ii, 85-146 [sic];
- **John MacDougall Gillies's** MS, ff.34-34A;
- **David Glen's** MS, f.395;
- **Robert Meldrum's** MS, ff. 6-8;

and in the following published sources:

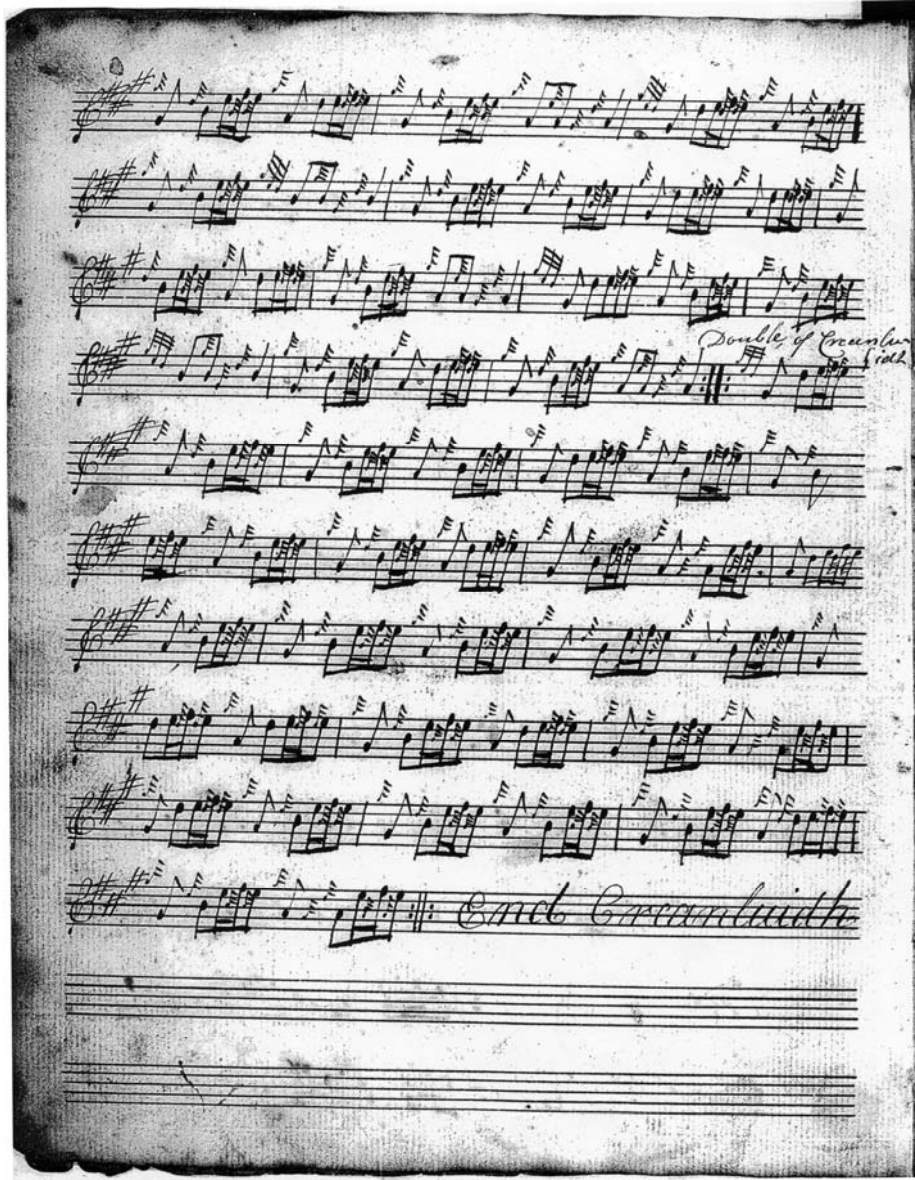
- **Donald MacDonald**, *Ancient Martial Music of Caledonia*, pp.30-33;
- **Niel MacLeod of Gesto**, *Collection of Pibaireachd or Pipe Tunes*, pp.41-3 (with the title "Kilchrist");
- **C. S. Thomason**, *Ceol Mor*, pp.13-15;
- **David Glen**, *Collection of Ancient Piobaireachd*, pp.105-6.

The **Hannay-McAuslan** score is perhaps the earliest of the written and published versions. It treats the tune as follows:









One notes the interesting timing of the figures at the phrase endings of the crunluath singling with their low A quavers divided by an E cutting.

**Donald MacDonald's** setting is rhythmically interesting and richly decorated. The accompaniment for keyboard suggests a square and metrically insistent timing of the fogsailte tripling, implying that it be timed as written, and some will have heard James MacColl play in this style. Similarly, the keyboard accompaniment suggests a similarly "square" timing of the crunluath movements: indeed the rocking ostinato figures of the left hand accompaniment sound intriguingly like boogie-woogie if played up to time:

# TILL CHRIOSDA (Glenarry's March)

*Played by Glenarry's Piper, at the Burning of the Church*

( FEE FEE FEE FEE )

in revenge of the murder of

## Longias & Chaill

of the Glenarry Family by the  
GLENARRY PEOPLE

SLOW

The musical score is written for piano and consists of five systems of music. The first system is marked 'SLOW'. The music is in 2/4 time and features a complex melody with many beamed sixteenth and thirty-second notes. A variation section labeled 'VAR: 1.' begins in the third system. The score is written in a style typical of 19th-century musical publications, with a focus on the piano accompaniment.

A historical account of this Fìobaireacht will be given in Vol: 2!

Walker & Anderson Engravers Edin?

VAR: 2.

Doubling VAR: 2.

n.c.

VAR: 3.

The image displays a musical score for pipes and drums, consisting of ten systems of staves. Each system typically includes a treble staff and a bass staff, with some systems having a third staff. The notation is highly rhythmic, featuring many beamed notes and repeat signs. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The score includes several performance instructions: "Doubling VAR:3." appears between the fourth and fifth systems; "D.C." (Da Capo) is located at the end of the eighth system; and "Cranluath or Round Movement." is written below the ninth system. The notation is dense and complex, characteristic of traditional Scottish pipe and drum music.

The image displays a musical score for a piece titled "Doubling of Creanluidh". The score is written for piano, with a treble and bass staff joined by a brace. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 2/4. The melody in the treble staff is highly ornate, featuring numerous grace notes (small 'f' marks) and rapid sixteenth-note passages. The bass staff provides a steady accompaniment with eighth and sixteenth notes. The piece concludes with a double bar line and the marking "D.C." (Da Capo).

Points of interest include the playing of a short E cadence in the ground onto an expressed low G or low A quaver; the fact that the ground is restated no fewer than four times; and the interesting possibilities vis-a-vis timing raised by the cascading decorative runs at the beginnings of bars seven and thirteen of the thumb variation. If one regarded the initial high A and high G as taking their time from the end of the previous bar, then something like the following might be a possibility:





**Niel MacLeod of Gesto** treats the tune as follows:

I hindo, ho dro, hin do, ho dro,  
           hin do, ho dro, hin do, ho dra,  
           hin do, ho dro, hin da chin drine.  
           hin do, ho dro, hin do, ho dra,  
           hin do, ho dro, hin do, ho dro,  
           hin do, ho dro, hin da chin drin.  
           hin do, ho dro, hin do, ho dra,  
           hin da, hin do, hin do chin drine.

1st Var.       I hin da, hin do, hin do, ho dro,  
               hin da, hin do, hin do, ho dro,  
               hin do, hin da, hin do, chin drine. [etc.]

Double. I hin da, hin do, hin do, hin do,  
           hin da, hin do, hin do, hin da,  
           hin do, hin da, hin do, hin drie. [etc.]

2d Var. I hin nin in da, hin nin in do,  
           hin nin in do, ho ho dro,  
           hin nin in da, hin nin in do,  
           hin nin in do, ho ho dro,  
           hin nin in do, hin nin in da,  
           hin nin in do, hie hie drie, [etc.]

Double. I hin nin in da, hin nin in do,  
           hin nin in do, hin nin in do,  
           hin nin in da, hin nin in do,  
           hin nin in do, hin nin in do,  
           hin nin in do, hin nin in da,  
           hin nin in do, hin dir in die, [etc.]

3d Var. I hin dar ir ich in, dor ir ichin,  
           hin dir ir i, hi o dro,  
           hin dor ir ich in, do ir ichin,  
           hin dor ir i, hi o dro,  
           hin dor ir ichin, dar ir ichin,  
           hio [hin?] dor ir ri, hi ie drie, [etc.]

Double. I hin dar ir ri, hien dor ir ri,  
hin dor ir ri, hin dor ir ri,  
hin dar ir ri, hin dor ir ri,  
hin dor ir ri, hin dor ir ri,  
hin dor ir ri, hin dar ir ri,  
hin dor ir ri, hin da tiri, [etc.]

In a note at the beginning of the collection Gesto says "First measure of each Tune to be played twice over, at the commencement, and once after every variation and doubling; but not to be played after the Crouluigh Mach or last part." (p.3). As it stands the Gesto canntaireachd presents obvious difficulties of interpretation: for example, its failure – except by context – to distinguish between low G and low A is shown up rather prominently by a tune like "Glengarry's March." In addition, the only obvious cadence note is the introductory "I" at the beginning of the tune and at the start of each variation, singling and doubling. This may be indirect confirmation of Joseph MacDonald's point that the disposition of these movements then lay within the artistic discretion of the player. It should be noted, too, that poor proof reading has led to the misplacing of the comma in the crunluath fosgailte singling above, effectively incorporating the beginning of one movement with the end of the previous one. For a general discussion of the Gesto collection and its context, see *The Highland Pipe and Scottish Society*, pp. 132-41.

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

169

*Bill Chiosda. \* cam*  
*Glenary's March*

*Nr 4.*

*Thump or war etc.*

*For 2nd*

*Bis*

*fine*

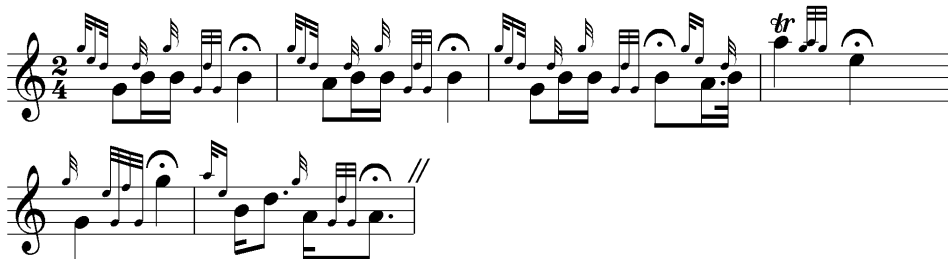


The most striking feature of MacKay's score is the long E cadence notes in the ground and thumb variation. During the first half of the twentieth century, the playing of the long E in this tune prompted adverse comment in the columns of the *Oban Times* (then the main forum for pipers) in a context of growing anxiety about piobaireachd being played too slowly, and with exaggeratedly prolonged cadence movements (see below): the long E was thought by some to be a modern vice, but MacKay's setting shows this feature present in the written record at an early stage. The similarities between MacKay and MacDonald's timings of the siubhal singling will also be noted. MacKay also directs that the ground be repeated after the taorluath doubling, and again at the end of the tune.



**D. S. MacDonald's** score closely follows its source in Angus MacKay's manuscript, and is not reproduced here.

**C. S. Thomason** gives the manuscripts of MacDonald and MacKay and the playing of Keith and Colin Cameron as his sources, but broadly follows MacDonald. Thomason approaches the high A runs as follows, emphasising the E and eliminating the G and D:



and so on.

**Colin Cameron's** setting appears in David Glen's *Collection of Ancient Piobaireachd*, with a note stating that it was "Communicated by Colin Cameron." It treats the tune thus:

# GLENGARRY'S MARCH.

GILLE CHRISDA.

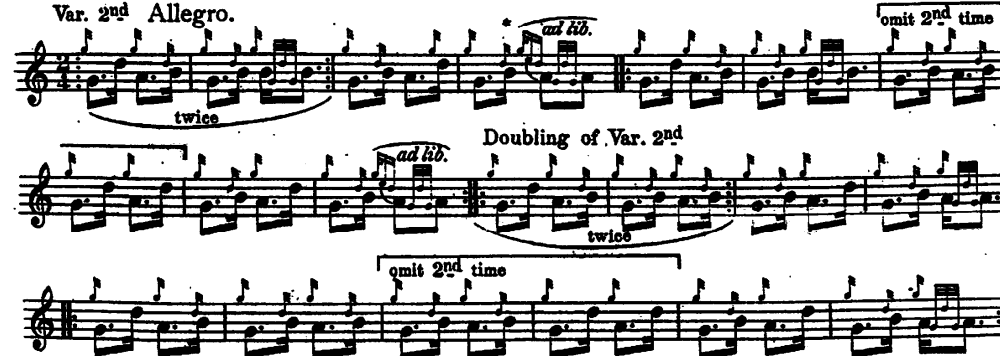
Ùrlar. Andante.



Var. 1<sup>st</sup>



Var. 2<sup>nd</sup> Allegro.



Doubling of Var. 2<sup>nd</sup>



Var. 3<sup>rd</sup>



\* This, and all similar passages are played entirely at the pleasure of the performer

Communicated by Colin Cameron.

**Doubling of Var. 3<sup>rd</sup>**

**Crùn-luath.**

**Dùblachadh a' Chrùn-luath.**

**Tripleachadh a' Chrùn-luath.**

Repeat the Ùrlar

There are a number of noteworthy points including the assertion of performer choice in the repetition cadences at phrase endings from the "Allegro" onwards; the choice of 4/4 for the ground leading to considerable prolongation of final notes at bar ends and the absence of repeats of the ground within the tune. Most interesting of all is the inclusion of a tripling of the crunluath fosgailte in the "opened" style of Donald MacDonald and other early writers

following a singling and doubling in the 'closed' style of Angus MacKay. This tripling is a highly unusual feature, appearing nowhere else in Glen or in Colin Cameron's own MS, although Uilleam Ross did use the device as a doubling in at least one tune – i.e. giving a MacKay-type "closed" crunluath fosgailte in the singling and "opened" MacDonald-style in the doubling ("The Battle of the Red Hill," *Ross' Collection*, p.21). However, the frequent addition of 'opened' crunluath fosgailte variations following a MacKay-style singling and doubling in tunes of this type in the Piobaireachd Society's second series, and their attribution to Sandy Cameron, (the younger) led to performer protest from the 1920s onwards (see below). The setting in Glen's MS is a mere sketch and is not reproduced here.

**John MacDougall Gillies** cuts cadence Es quickly down on to accented low Gs and As:







As usual with the Gillies manuscript, the later conventional variations are graced only where there might be possible ambiguity. Gillies's setting is notable for its much brisker approach to the ground than Colin Cameron's, and its timing of the thumb variation. Gillies also gives precise time values for Cameron's cadences; and he does not include the crunluath fosgailte tripling which is such an arresting feature of Colin Cameron's setting.

**Robert Meldrum** set the tune as follows:

Robert Meldrum, ground, line 1



Robert Meldrum, thumb variation, lines 1, 3



Robert Meldrum, siubhal singling, line 1



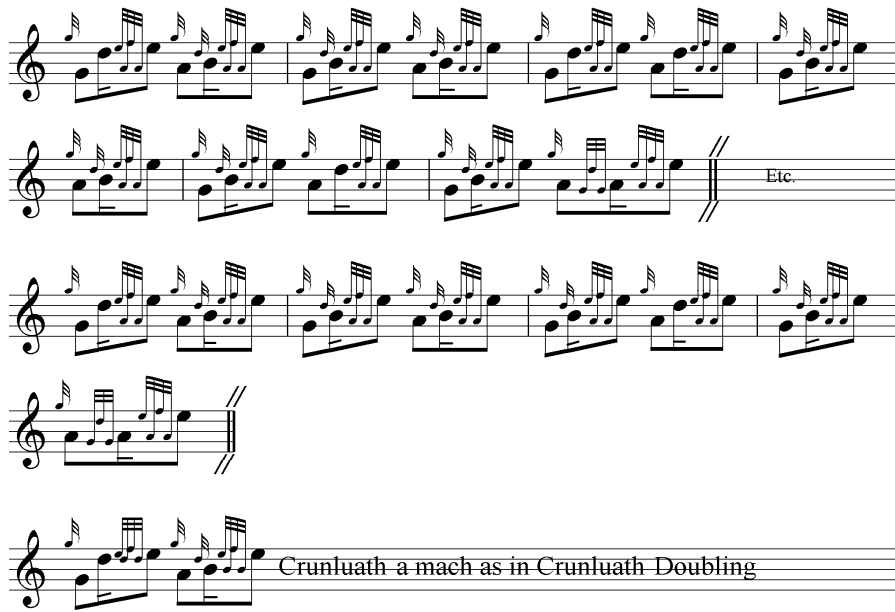
Robert Meldrum, taorluath foscailte, line 1



Robert Meldrum, Crunluath foscailte singling, line 1



Robert Meldrum, crunluath doubling, line 1, 3 and a mach



This seems to be the only recorded version showing this style with its implied pointing of the B quavers in the ground, reversing the usual rhythmical pattern found in other scores. It may be similar to the setting noted by Willie Ross during the 1920s, which John MacDonald of Inverness is recorded as finding unattractive (see below). Meldrum's MS suggests that by 1929 (the date given on the MS), the description in the published settings of the Piobaireachd Society of Colin Cameron's "opened" tripling movement as a "crunluath a mach" had been adopted by at least one leading player of the older generation.

### *Commentary:*

In C. S. Thomason's "Ceol Mor Legends," there is a typically gloomy note on this tune from John Johnston of Coll, probably dating from around 1890-1910:

It is a splendid piece – one of the very best known – and was in consequence revered by the Great Pipers for centuries...I always kept it fresh in my memory owing to its own merits, and the events connected with it – I never heard any of the modern pipers playing it, or even attempting to do so. – I am aware it is to be found in Books of "Ceol Mor" but they make a sorry mess of it.' (ff.15-20)

Johnston had a number of fixed ideas and two of them are visible here, namely that piobaireachd was dying, and that this was (at least partly) owing to it having been written down incorrectly. But Johnston was an isolated figure who seems to have had little opportunity to listen to contemporary playing, as his regular contributions to the *Oban Times* indicate.

Malcolm MacInnes (compiler of *120 Bagpipe Tunes Gleanings & Styles*, 1940) used "Glengarry's March" as an example of the difficulty of interpreting canntaireachd scores,



particularly in the matter of "cadence notes," and as illustrating his idea that the high A in the thumb variations of tunes whose principal tonic was G represented a breach of idiom. His letter, "Evolution of the Pibroch. Lessons from Gesto," was published in the *Oban Times*, (25/11/1922, p.3) as follows:

"Sir, – The tune "Kilchrist" (Glengarry's March) begins in Gesto: –

I hin do, ho dro, hin do, ho dro  
hin do, ho dro, hin do, ho dra,  
hin do, ho dro, hin do, chin drine.

As the tune is written (and, I understand, played today), this would have to be: –

I hindoho dro hindoho dro  
hindoho dro hindoho dra  
hindoho dro hin da chindrin,

for I cannot conceive of anyone putting down the rhythm of the tune today in the separate syllables used by Gesto. And if there is added in (as their ought to be) the modern "cadence" note E which is played before every hin, the alteration of the melody is seen to be palpable and serious. How has the alteration come about? Gesto had but one introductory note – the E at the beginning; but now this E introduces every bar of the ground except the very last, and, moreover, is itself graced with a G, is succeeded by a small D as part of the cadence, and counts substantially in the time.

I consider it practically certain that Gesto had the first note (hin) short, and the second (do) long, and kept that sequence throughout the ground. It is quite certain that after the ground he uses the same vocables for this sequence – a short followed by a long. With these values the vocables read (or sing) smoothly, with the reverse values they are impossible.

The second last bar of the modern ground – containing the usual final flourish – seems a very rocky bit of road for the ground of a pibroch. Personally, I prefer Gesto whose flourish is the simple one of introducing at the beginning of the bar the high note (D) in place of the B. Gesto finishes: –

Hin da, hindo, hindo, chin drin.

The present style finishes –

Hayindain do, in do chin drin.

The first variation in the modern set is not in Gesto at all; and to me this is particularly satisfactory, for I have always felt the high A here to be just as hideous as the G in "Mary MacLeod." This note should be replaced by a high G and the subsequent E beat split into GE, with a double high A grace on the G (and perhaps a single on the E).

But the most interesting lesson learned from Gesto by me is that the pibroch siubhal and subsequent variations were once less uniform than they are now...'

In a letter to the *Oban Times* of 6/11/1937 ( p.3), MacInnes gave further details for his suggested timing of "Glengarry's March" commenting adversely on a recently heard performance of this tune by a leading player in which the introductory E's were held so long that they became in effect melody notes, and the following Gs and As were treated as passing notes, concluding: "he gets first prizes with it from the recognised authorities." For additional comment on this point, see Robert Meldrum's "Reminiscences" below, which were compiled

in collaboration with Malcolm MacInnes.

In the spring of 1923, Angus MacPherson of Inveran launched a fierce attack on the Piobaireachd Society's recently acquired habit of attaching a MacDonald-style "opened" crunluath fosgailte variation on to MacKay-style "closed" singlings and doublings as a kind of "a mach" in all suitable tunes of this type:

Last year, for the first time in the history of Piobaireachd playing, the Society published what in their opinion was a "crunluath mach" and tacked it on to that beautiful tune "The Groat."

This year I find the same thing occurs in the setting given of that most delightful tune "Ghillie Chrìosd", (Glengarry's March).

Now I maintain with all due respect that there is not a piper living to-day (and certainly never dreamed of among those now dead) who can put a Crunluath Mach on either of those two tunes nor any such tunes requiring a Crunluath Fosgailte, and that the invented Crunluath Mach is simply the doubling of a Crunluath Fosgailte or open Crunluath, and quite out of place after the singling and doubling already in keeping with the tunes referred to.

("Piobaireachd Playing," *Oban Times*, 17/03/1923, p.3)

John MacDonald of Inverness was similarly opposed to the playing of this movement. In "Some Notes of a conversation Seton Gordon had with John MacDonald on Saturday May 3rd 1941 on the journey by road from Inveran, Invershin, to Inverness," John MacDonald stated that his father had been taught by Donald Cameron and

...it was quite wrong to play a Crunluath a Mach on a Crunluath Fosgailte. He never heard any of the old players play BOTH. But Colin Cameron sometimes played the closed, sometimes the open variety. BUT NEVER BOTH. (Seton Gordon Papers, National Library of Scotland, Acc.5640/2).

For further discussion of this point (including letters supporting MacPherson's position), see *The Highland Pipe and Scottish Society*, pp. 334-6.

In his long and fascinating series of "Reminiscences" in the *Oban Times* Robert Meldrum discussed how the timing of piobaireachd grounds had become noticeably more square and bookish during his lifetime, citing the mistiming of the *eallach* or introductory movement on A, and the increasing prolongation of cadence notes:

I sometimes feel strongly inclined to describe the development and progress of piping during my times, but I am restrained by the difficulty of the task as well as by the risk of giving offence...

It is known to everyone that in the development of the lighter music the advance in fingering has been immense, the old tunes being improved, and new tunes more complicated though sometimes not more musical. In piobaireachd playing also there is a change although it is not easy to describe it. The playing of the variations with their clearly marked rhythm is practically the same as of old; but the playing of the ground is not. A certain lack of quiet smoothness seems to me to be general even amongst good pipers, at least of a certain school. Ross and Malcolm Macpherson never had a snatch or jerk in their ground. For instance the introductory E in such tunes as "Mary Macleod" and "The Only Son" could never have been mistaken for a theme note, nor the first A shortened into a grace note, nor the phrase made the rattle that is common to-day. It was timed like the parallel phrase on the B. The encroachment of this introductory E is by some leading players allowed in "Glengarry's March" (Cillechrìosd) so far as to swamp the low G into a grace and then the low A into a grace so that the point of the tune is lost – the contrast between the low G and the low A....

Of course individual notes have to be interpreted as regards length, for it would be impossible to write

them accurately, owing chiefly to the prevalence of pauses of varying lengths made after phrases. Perfect expression of any music cannot be written, least of all in pibroch. Hence the value of the living instructor. I once sent my son to Malcolm Macpherson with written pieces of certain tunes which were difficult to time, but Malcolm would not even make this use of the written notes. His reply was, "If your son cannot learn without the paper you should keep him at home." (13/07/1940, p.3).

Correspondence concerning "Glengarry's March" in the editorial papers of Archibald Campbell (National Library of Scotland MS 22098), indicates that Willie Ross was taught it by his uncle Aeneas Rose, of Blair Atholl, along with "The Vaunting," "Desperate Battle, (Skye)," "MacIntyre's Salute," "Colbeck" and "Craigellachie" as well as "several others." Ross wrote to Campbell that:

I played these tunes for Sandy [Cameron] , he agreed to the settings and we spent a good many evenings at the Tower of London going over some Tunes. I heard Gillies play Donald Grumach, just the Ground, and it was practically the same. I don't think Gillies cared for the tune, because I once asked him for a Copy of it and he said he wasn't very sure of the correct version and left it at that. I think "Cill Criost" should be in 2/4. I am enclosing two ways of writing it without having to put extra Bars, of course a Pause Mark will straighten it out a lot for you. But if you think extra bars would be better perhaps it would be as well to put them in But then on the other hand it would give room for agitators to write to the Press. I do agree that Donald Ban be in 6/8. [Campbell actually set it in 4/4] I also enclose 3 ways of putting it on paper it may help you a little. Its a hard job writing Piobaireachd, and I am sure you will be very tired of it.' (ff.110-12, 20/11/1927)

In a note, "For File of Glengarry's March," Campbell added

The Attached letter was written by A. [Sandy] Cameron in reply to one which I wrote to him enclosing the slip of music paper also attached. I told him that I had played the tune to Gillies, who suggested that my style of the Thumb variation was not Camerons & in proof showed me a copy which he had taken from Cameron's book. I had a note already that the style of the tune written out by me & already on the file was said by Cameron to be that of his father Donald Cameron. (f.177)

The letter from Sandy Cameron, dated "The Sycamore, Achnacarry, Spean Bridge," indicates that Campbell had sent him various bits of "Glengarry's March" saying in effect that "you taught me thus, but Gillies does it a different way" . Cameron's reply suggests that he was teaching something different from the family "house style" to his gentleman pupil:

"Glengarry's March" is played by Gillies as it was written in my book, and it was played the same way by my late brother Colin, it was a favourite tune of his. I prefer it the way I gave it you at Kilberry. (15th Feby. 1921).

In 1929 Campbell wrote to the distinguished naturalist and piping judge Seton Gordon:

It is a fine tune. It was a favourite of Colin Cameron's and Gillies and John MacDonald had it more or less in his style. Sandy Cameron taught me a somewhat different way of playing the Ground and Thumb, which he said he preferred. I have never heard anyone else play it exactly the same way The setting in the P.S. book is an attempt to reproduce it. You give a good weight to the first dotted quaver and hang slightly on the second semiquaver with the high G grace note. John MacDonald liked it well enough when I played it to him. It is not altogether easy to pick up. Ross has yet another way, hanging on the first semiquaver, &

this I understood John MacDonald not to like. We were all playing it one night in the Caledonian Hotel at Inverness... (Seton Gordon Papers, NLS Acc.5640, 08/06/1929)

"Glengarry's March" is a favourite competition piece. Details of its use in the old Edinburgh competitions of the Highland Societies of London and Scotland can be found in Ruairidh Halford-MacLeod, "The Top Twenty Piobaireachds 1824-1844 -and the influence of Donald MacDonald and Angus MacKay" *Piping Times*, vol. 47 no. 8, May 1995 pp.50-54.

R. B. Nicol of Balmoral won the Inverness medal in 1930 playing this tune in the pouring rain – the Northern Meeting was in those days an outdoor event – and it was the worst weather anybody could remember for half a century. Donald MacLeod also won the medal with it at Inverness in 1947. The latter recollected (in his article "Some Memories of John MacDonald," *Piping Times*, vol.14. no.6, March 1962, pp.6-7) how he had hurried round to see his teacher, John MacDonald (who was a fierce instructor, although a kindly man in everyday life), and had played his winning tune while his tutor made tea: "There was a deathly hush when I finished. . . . 'MacLeod,' he said, 'did they give you the medal for that?' "

\* \* \*

Electronic text © Dr William Donaldson, Aberdeen, Scotland, 4th August 2010