

## MacLeod of Raasay's Salute

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

- **Donald MacDonald's** MS, ff.53-58;
- **Peter Reid's** MS, f.47;

and in the following published sources:

- **Angus MacKay**, *Collection of Ancient Piobaireachd*, pp.9-11;
- **Donald MacPhee**, *Collection of Piobaireachd*, ii, 5-7;
- **C. S. Thomason**, *Ceol Mor*, p.55;
- **David Glen**, *Collection of Ancient Piobaireachd*, pp.37-9.

**Donald MacDonald** sets the tune like this:

LAMENT FOR THE DEATH OF JOHN MACLEOD. 58

Handwritten musical score for 'Lament for the Death of John Macleod'. The score is written on 12 staves, organized into three groups of four staves each. The notation is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The music features a variety of note values, including eighth, sixteenth, and thirty-second notes, as well as rests and accidentals. The score is written in ink on aged paper. On the right margin, there are handwritten numbers: '664' next to the first group of staves, and '12 12 8' next to the third group of staves.

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Handwritten musical score for pipes and drums, numbered 54. The score consists of 12 staves of music, featuring complex rhythmic patterns and melodic lines. The notation includes various note values, rests, and dynamic markings. A 'T' marking is visible on the 9th staff. The score is written in a traditional style with a key signature of one flat and a common time signature.

A handwritten musical score for pipes and drums, consisting of 12 staves. The notation is dense and complex, featuring many beamed notes, slurs, and various accidentals (sharps, flats, naturals). The score is written in a traditional style, with some markings that appear to be specific to pipe music, such as grace notes and specific rhythmic values. The number '55' is written in the top right corner of the first staff. The number '12' is written vertically on the right side of the eighth staff. The overall appearance is that of a manuscript or a working draft of a piece of music.







**MacDonald** has no siubhal; he proceeds from the thumb variation to taorluath singling and doubling and crunluath singling, doubling and a mach. He gives no indication of repeats of the ground within the tune or at its close. MacDonald, Reid and MacKay have the same rhythmically awkward feel in the closing sequence of the ground and thumb variation, as if they had all

**Peter Reid** sets the tune as follows:



The note at the foot of Peter Reid's setting says "here the doubling of 2nd Variation with Taorluaidh & Creanluaidh." Although we now believe it possible that Reid could actually have studied with Donald MacDonald in Campbelltown, he uses a similar title to Angus MacKay's. He has MacDonald's anacrusis, but does not follow the latter in every detail of the tune. For example, the B>A figure in MacDonald's bar five in the ground is two low As in Reid; on the repeat of line one (MacDonald's bar 8) we get grip B > low A, rather than MacDonald's cut down from the C. Since this is repeated at the corresponding position in the Thumb Variation, we may suppose that Reid intended this – i.e. it is not a slip. Reid's concluding gesture in the ground seems rhythmically more plausible than MacDonald's but even so, the GED cadence on the final figure seems superfluous Reid approaches the Thumb Variation differently as well, evoking high A more sparingly than MacDonald. Reid includes a siubhal singling and doubling, (which MacDonald and MacKay do not), before passing to his taorluath variations and in it he follows—in line two—the tone row adopted by Donald MacPhee for the later variations of the tune.

**Angus MacKay** sets the tune like this:

# FAILTE MHIC GHILLE CHALLAM. Mac Leod of Rasay's Salute.

Composed by  
Angus Mackay Gearloch.

IV.

Thumb Variation.

Variation 1.

Note..The History of each Piobaireachd, as far as known to the Editor, will be found in the Notes at the end of the Volume.

The musical score consists of ten staves of music, each containing a complex rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, typical of pipe and drum notation. The notation includes various accidentals and dynamic markings. The first four staves are followed by the text "Doubling of Variation 1." and the next four staves. The final two staves are preceded by "Grun - luath." and "D.C." (Da Capo).

The musical score consists of two systems of six staves each. The notation is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The first system contains six staves of music, and the second system contains six staves of music. The music is a complex, fast-paced melody featuring many sixteenth and thirty-second notes, with frequent beaming and slurs. The notation is dense and intricate, typical of traditional Scottish pipe music.

Doubling of Crun-luath.

D.C.

**MacKay's** approach is broadly similar to MacDonald's in the development of the tune, but he differs from the latter in a number of details. MacKay avoids opening with the anacrusis we see in Reid and MacDonald, but traces of it remain in the rather awkward E cadence at the beginning of the second half of the A phrase in the ground and thumb variation. We note too his squarer 4/4 timing. MacKay repeats the ground at the end of the taorluath and crunluath variations, but has no crunluath a mach.

**Donald MacPhee** sets the tune like this:

FAILTE MHIC GHILLE CHALUIM.  
MACLEOD OF RASSAY'S SALUTE.

Composed by  
Angus Mackay, Gairloch  
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Thumb Var. 1st

Var. 2nd Taorluath

6

Taorluath Continued



Doubling of Taorluath.



Var. 3<sup>rd</sup> Cruiluath.



7

**Crunluath Continued**

**Doubling of Crunluath.**

**MacPhee** broadly takes MacDonald and MacKay's route through the tune, although he drops the obtrusive E cadence in the middle of the A phrase of the ground. In accordance with his general editorial policy of making his variations closely follow the tonal contours of the ground, he adjusts the tone row in bars nineteen and twenty of the variations so that they read A-E-C-C rather than MacDonald and MacKay's A-C-E-C, although this was to create controversy later.

**C. S. Thomason** seems to have had an open mind on the matter, reproducing both MacDonald's and MacKay's grounds and thumb variations, and the taorluath and crunluath as they had set them, and then as given by MacPhee on adjacent pages. He cites Colin Cameron amongst his sources for this tune:

The image shows a musical score for two tunes: 'LAMENT FOR JOHN MACLEOD' (D. MacDonald) and 'MACLEOD OF RASAY'S SALUTE' (A. MacKay). The score is written for a single melodic line, likely for a pipe, with a 6/8 time signature. The first tune, 'LAMENT FOR JOHN MACLEOD', is marked with the notation '1.58 G. 2A.' and consists of two staves of music. The second tune, 'MACLEOD OF RASAY'S SALUTE', is marked with '1.58 G. 2A.' and also consists of two staves. Below these are two staves of variations, marked '31.41.60.70.' and 'Variations for both above.' To the right of the main staves is a vertical column of smaller staves, likely representing a drum accompaniment or a different instrumental part. The score is printed in black ink on a white background.

LAMENT FOR JOHN MACLEOD. (D. MacDonald.)  
1.5.8G, 2A

MACLEOD OF RASAY'S SALUTE. (A. MacKay.)  
1.5.8G, 2A

3T, 6C Variations for both above 4T, 70

The image shows a page from a musical score for bagpipes and drums. It contains two main tunes: 'Lament for John MacLeod' by D. MacDonald and 'MacLeod of Rasay's Salute' by A. MacKay. Both are in 1.5.8G, 2A time signature. Below these are variations for both tunes, labeled '3T, 6C' and '4T, 70'. The score is written on multiple staves, with a vertical staff on the right side. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and bar lines.

David Glen sets the tune like this:

# MACLEOD OF RAASAY'S SALUTE.

FÀILTE MHIC GILLE CHALUIM.

Composed by  
ANGUS MACKAY OF GAIRLOCH.

Ùrlar. *Moderately slow.*



The Thumb Var.



Taor-luath.



The musical score is written for a single melodic line on a treble clef staff. It consists of two main sections. The first section, 'Dùblachadh an Taor-luaith', is a 16-measure piece featuring a continuous eighth-note pattern. The second section, 'Crùn-luath', is a 16-measure piece featuring a continuous sixteenth-note pattern. Both sections conclude with a repeat sign. The tempo is marked 'Allegretto'.

Dùblachadh an Taor-luaith.

Repeat the Ùrlar

Crùn-luath.



Dùblachadh a' Chrùn-luaith



Repeat the Ùrlar.

*Commentary:*

"Fionn"'s note in David Glen's *Collection of Ancient Piobaireachd* gives the background of the tune as follows:

This Salute is said to have been composed by Angus Mackay of Gairloch, son of Iain Dall Mackay, on the birth of James Macleod, tenth of Raasay, in 1761. John, ninth of Raasay, who was Laird during the visit of the learned Dr. Johnson, had a large family of daughters, six of whom were born before the birth of the heir in 1761. There were great rejoicings at the birth of James, and Angus Mackay, seeking to give expression to his own joy as well as that of the Macleods of Raasay, composed this well known composition. James, tenth of Raasay, died in 1824, and was succeeded by his son John, eleventh of Raasay. ("Historic, Biographic, and Legendary Notes to the Tunes," p.7).

The MacKay pipers of Gairloch are the subject of an interesting account in Osgood MacKenzie's book *A Hundred Years in the Highlands* (London, 1921), as follows:

## CHAPTER XVII

## THE FAMOUS GAIRLOCH PIPERS

IN 1609 an ancestor of mine, who was also one of the most famous of the Gairloch lairds, John Roy Mackenzie, paid a visit to the laird of Reay in Sutherland. I believe the laird of Reay (Lord Reay) was his stepfather. On John Roy's return from his visit to Tongue House, Mackay accompanied him as far as the Meikle Ferry, on the Kyle of Sutherland. On their arrival at the ferry it seems there was another gentleman crossing, accompanied by a groom, who attempted to prevent anyone entering the boat but his master and his party. Mackay had his piper with him, a young, handsome lad of only seventeen summers. A scuffle ensued between the piper and the groom, the former drew his dirk, and with one blow cut the groom's hand off at the wrist.

The laird of Reay at once said to his piper: "Rory, I cannot keep you with me any longer; you must at once fly the country and save your life." John Roy said: "Will you come with me to Gairloch, Rory?" And the piper was only too glad to accept the offer.

As they were parting, the laird of Reay said to his stepson: "Now, as you are getting my piper, you must send me in exchange a good deer-stalker." On his return home the latter at once sent Hugh Mackenzie, whose descendants still live in the Reay country. To this day it is remembered how and in what capacity their ancestor came from Gairloch.

I may mention that, besides the piper, John Roy took two good deer-hounds back with him from Sutherland, and even their names are not yet forgotten—"Cu dubh" and "Faoileag" ("Black Hound" and "Seagull").

Rory, the young piper, who was also a Mackay and was born about 1592, was soon after followed by an older brother, called Donald. It was Donald who was in attendance as piper on the twelve sons of John Roy, when Kenneth, Lord of Kintail, met

them at Torridon, where John Roy so nearly met with his death.

Rory was piper in succession to four of the Gairloch Lairds—namely, John Roy, Alasdair Breac (who was a head taller than any of John Roy's eleven other sons), Kenneth, the sixth laird, and his son Alexander. Rory's home was at Talladale, on the mainland, while his first two masters, John Roy and Alasdair Breac, resided mostly in their island homes on Eilean Ruairidh Beag and Eilean Suthainn, in Loch Maree, opposite Talladale, which were, I suppose, considered safer at any rate for the ladies and the children, in those wild times. The last two chiefs, however, whom Rory served, lived in the original Tigh Dige or Stank <sup>1</sup> House of Gairloch, which had the moat round it and the drawbridge. Rory did not marry till he was sixty years old. He had just the one son, the celebrated blind piper, and during the latter part of his life he lived in the Baile Mor of Gairloch, so as to be near his masters in the Stank House. Rory died about 1689, in extreme old age, being, like his son, almost a centenarian. He was buried in the Gairloch churchyard. He is said to have been a remarkably handsome and powerful Highlander. He literally *played* an important part in the many fights which took place during the earlier part of his career.

John Mackay, the only son of Rory, was born at Talladale in 1656. He was not blind from birth, as has been erroneously stated, but was deprived of his sight by smallpox when about seven years old. He was known as Iain Dall (Blind John) or an Piobaire Dall (the Blind Piper). After mastering the first principles of pipe music under his father's tuition, he was sent to the celebrated Macrimmon in Skye to finish his musical education. He remained seven years with Macrimmon, and then returned to his native parish, where he assisted his father in the office of piper to the laird of Gairloch.

After his father's death he became piper to Sir Kenneth Mackenzie, the first baronet of Gairloch, and after Sir Kenneth's death to his son, Sir Alexander, the second baronet and ninth laird of Gairloch. He combined the office of bard with that of piper.

<sup>1</sup> Stank = moat.

Iain Dall retired when in advanced years, and Sir Alexander allowed him a good pension. Like his father, he married late in life. He had but two children—Angus, who succeeded him, and a daughter. After he was superannuated, he passed his remaining years in visiting gentlemen's houses, where he was always a welcome guest. Like his father, he lived to a great age. He died in 1754, aged ninety-eight, and was buried in the same grave as his father in the Gairloch churchyard. He composed twenty-four pibrochs, besides numberless strathspeys, reels, and jigs, the most celebrated of which are called *Cailleach a Mhuillear* and *Cailleach Liath Rasaidh*.

When he was with Macrimmon there were no fewer than eleven other apprentices studying with the master piper, but Iain Dall outstripped them all, and thus gained for himself the envy and ill-will of the others. On one occasion, as Iain and another apprentice were playing the same tune alternately, Macrimmon asked the other lad why he did not play like Iain Dall. The lad replied, "By St. Mary, I'd do so if my fingers had not been after the skate," alluding to the sticky state of his fingers after having eaten some of that fish on which Macrimmon had fed them at dinner. And this has become a proverbial taunt which northern pipers to this day hurl at their inferior brethren from the south.

One of the Macrimmons, known by the nickname of Padruig Caogach, composed the first part of a tune called *Am port Leathach* (the half tune), but was quite unable to finish it. The imperfect tune became very popular, and, as it was at the end of two years still unfinished, Iain Dall set to work and completed it. He called it *Lasan Phadruig Chaogach*, or "The Wrath of Padruig Caogach," thus, whilst disowning any share in the merit of the composition, anticipating the result which would follow.

Patrick was furiously incensed, and bribed the other apprentices, who were doubtless themselves also inflamed by jealousy, to put an end to Iain Dall's life. This they attempted while walking with him at Dun Bhorreraig, where they threw the young blind piper over a precipice. Iain Dall fell eight yards, but alighted on the soles of his feet and suffered no material injury. The place is still called *Leum an Doill* (the Leap of the Blind).

The completion of Macrimmon's tune brought great fame to Iain Dall, and gave rise to the well-known Gaelic proverb which, being translated, says: "The apprentice outwits the master." Iain Dall made a number of celebrated Gaelic songs and poems. One of them, called *Coire an easain*, was composed on the death of Mackay, Lord Reay. It is said not to be surpassed in the Gaelic language. Another fine poem of his was in the praise of Lady Janet Mackenzie of Scatwell on her becoming the wife of Sir Alexander, the ninth laird of Gairloch. His fame as a bard and poet seems to have almost equalled his reputation as a piper. Several of his songs and poems appear in that excellent collection *The Beauties of Gaelic Poetry*.

Angus, the only son of Iain Dall, succeeded his illustrious father as piper to the lairds of Gairloch. He was born about 1725. He was piper to Sir Alexander Mackenzie, tenth laird of Gairloch, and when Sir Alexander visited France as a young man he left Angus in Edinburgh for tuition. We know little of him beyond that he was a handsome man, and that he at least equalled his ancestors in musical attainments. He attended a competition in pipe music whilst in Edinburgh. The other competing pipers, jealous of his superior talents, made a plot to destroy his chance. The day before the competition they got possession of his pipes and pierced the bag in several places, so that when he began to practise he could not keep the wind in the pipes. But Angus had a fair friend named Mary. To her he went in his trouble. She found for him a sheep-skin, from which, undressed as it was, he formed a new bag for his beloved pipes, and with this crude bag he succeeded next day in carrying off the coveted prize. He composed the well-known pibroch called *Moladh Mairi*, or "The Praise of Mary," in honour of his kind helper. Angus lived also to a good old age, and was succeeded by his son John.

John Mackay, grandson of the blind piper, was born about 1753, and became, on his father's death, family piper to my grandfather, Sir Hector Mackenzie of Gairloch. As a young man he went to the Reay country, the native land of his great-grandfather Rory, and there received tuition on the little pipes which are often used for dance music. He lived in the latter part of his

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career at Slatadale, where he married and had a numerous family, for whose advancement he emigrated to America with all his children except one daughter. She had previously married, but her father was so anxious that she should emigrate with the rest of the family that she had to hide herself the night before they left Gairloch, in order to avoid being compelled to accompany them. John Mackay was a splendid piper, and when he went to America Sir Hector said he would never care to hear pipe music again, and he never kept another piper. John prospered in America, and died at Picton about 1835. One of his sons, who was Stipendiary Magistrate in Nova Scotia, died in the autumn of 1884. The daughter who remained in Gairloch was married to a Maclean, and their son, John Maclean of Strath, called in Gaelic Iain Buidhe Taillear, has supplied much of the information here given regarding his ancestors, the hereditary pipers of the Gairloch family.

It is a singular fact that the four long-lived Mackays were pipers to the lairds of Gairloch during almost exactly two centuries, during which there were eight lairds of Gairloch in regular succession from father to son, but only the four pipers.

"MacLeod of Raasay's Salute" became the subject of an exchange in the *Oban Times* in 1883 which sheds interesting light on the authority being claimed for Angus MacKay's work by the later years of the nineteenth century, the growing tyranny of the printed score and the pedantry to which it could give rise. At Oban that year, the famous John MacColl had won playing the tune in his teacher Donald MacPhee's setting, provoking the following comment from a correspondent in Renfrewshire, writing under the pseudonym "Vandaura":

it is frequently noticed, even at some of the best gatherings, that competitors mis-place parts of the tune, and again leave some parts out altogether. Mistakes of this kind, probably the result of nervousness, carelessness, or ignorance, should never be overlooked by the judges. But it is a fact, nevertheless, that such cases are at times overlooked, and the judges as if it were to show their own ignorance or carelessness on some of these occasions have awarded the bunglers first honours, to the infinite disgust of all the other professionals. As a case in point I may just here state that McColl, who was lately awarded the silver cup presented by the Marquis of Lorn, and competed for at Oban, did

not lift the variations of his piobaireachda [sic] off[f] the ground work of the t[une], an error sufficient of itself to have put him *hors de combat*. The judges may not have noticed this; it matters not, it is a fact all the same, and can be vouched for by many of the professional who were present and declared, and justly so, that the cup was fairly won by John MacBain. It is cases of the above kind that tend to bring bagpipe competitions into disrepute, and dishearten our best performers, and will ere long if not checked by a [sic] honest and careful system of judging reduce competitions to what they are well nigh already – a farce. ("Bagpipe Competition," from "Vandaura," *Oban Times*, 10/11/1883, p.5)

John MacColl himself replied, claiming that certain professional pipers were too ignorant to be influenced by MacKay's (or by implication) any book, continuing that his critic

...says that I did not lift the variations of my Piobaireachd off the ground work of the tune when competing for the silver cup at Oban Games. Now, I beg to differ with him. I know I did not play it exactly as some of the professionals he refers to would, for I did not wish to do so. I was speaking to some of them about the tune on many occasions, but they could only say – "That is not the way it is in MacKay's book." I believe some of them never spent five minutes to look if MacKay took the variations properly off the ground work. If "Vandaura" or any of his professionals takes the trouble to compare MacKay's book and MacPhee's, on the tune of "MacLeod of Raasay's Salute" (this being the tune referred to), and carefully look how each bar in the ground work is carried on in the Taorluadh and Crunluath variations, they will, if they properly understand how a Piobaireachd is composed, come to the conclusion that in one of the bars MacKay put the "cart before the horse," this being the great blunder for which "Vandaura" thinks I should have been put *hors-de-combat*. Why is this case taken as an exception? I know pupils, and sons of one of our best authorities for Piobaireachd, [one assumes Donald Cameron] who all play a different style." ("Bagpipe Competition," 24/11/1883, p.4)

As noted above, it is interesting that a tune with such obviously "bright" tonality – a pentatonic scale A-B-C-E-F, giving considerable emphasis to the C – should be identified by Donald MacDonald as a lament. We may note, too, the significant melodic ties with "Scarce of Fishing."

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