

Set Tunes for the Gold Medal Competitions in 2013

The following notes are from the piobaireachd judges' seminar held on 3 April 2013 to discuss the set tunes. They are published in the hope that they will be of some interest to competing pipers and others. They should, however, be regarded only as the output from an informal discussion and neither as a complete and authoritative analysis of the tunes nor as a set of directions on how they should be played. Likewise, the sources listed should not be taken to be comprehensive.

There are sound clips of some of the tunes, illustrating possible ways of playing them, in the members' section of the Piobaireachd Society's website at www.piobaireachd.co.uk

Alan Forbes

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**Nameless (Hiharin odin hiharin dro) (Angus Mackay's MS) PS 5
p148; K p112**

This is quite a straightforward tune and, as a result, players will have to think about ways of keeping their presentations interesting. Kilberry shows the ground as common time, but writes some bars in 3/4. PS and Angus Mackay have the ground in 3/4, and use of medium/medium/strong pulsing and 2-bar phrasing would help to add musical colour.

Players may want to consider the timing options for lines 1 & 2 in bar 7 of the ground. In Angus Mackay's 'Kintarbert' MS, the C with grip is cut down to low A, while in Kilberry it is the opposite, with the C held and low A cut, and in PS 5 the notes are of equal length. This also applies to the repeat of line 1, bars 3 & 5.

The taorluath and crunluath variations change to 2/4 time. In the singlings, using the final low As as linking notes keeps the variations flowing, while thought might also be given to the expression of phrase ends in the doublings to keep them interesting and attractive.

We may hear taorluath and crunluath movements from low G played in two different ways - the D grace note played on low G or on the change to low A.

In the crunluath, line 1 bar 7 and elsewhere, the first B might be played short and the second long, as in PS 5, or vice versa, as in Angus Mackay.

The Rout of Glenfruin

PS 8 p221; K p91;

Binneas p113

The setting in PS 8 is given as that taught by Alexander Cameron and John MacDougall Gillies. Angus MacKay's MS differs from the PS in the following respects:-

- The omission of cadential Es in the thumb variation and its doubling.
- In the leumluath, taorluath and crunluath doublings, an E is introduced in place of B in the second bar of the second phrase.
- No a mach variation.

The Campbell Canntaireachd follows a similar path through the tune as MacKay, omitting the leumluath, but introduces a further E instead of a C into the 'A' phrase of each of the middle variations. However errors are present in the editorial notes in PS 8 which cannot be taken as an accurate copy of the original. Anyone playing this would have to produce their own transcript for the judges and vouch for its accuracy.

The setting in Donald MacDonald's published book is interesting and attractive in its own right and deviations are enumerated accurately in the editorial notes.

Notwithstanding the change in note timing in the ground, an E cadence figure at the end of each phrase is uniformly to a C followed by a low A with an intervening low G grace note. The cadential Es in the thumb variations are dropped apart from an introductory one and a dithis is substituted for the leumluath. There are singling, doubling and trebling variations in this dithis, and the taorluath contains an a mach movement. In the singlings of these variations the most striking difference is a C grip on C as the last figure in the B phrase where in MacKay this appears simply as a cadence played to C. A recording of Bob Brown playing this setting can be heard in the sound clips section.

The setting in PS 8 does beg one question and that is where these cadences in the thumb variations come from as they do not appear in the earlier sources. Competitors may wish to drop the cadences in the doubling, provided that they warn the judges that they intend doing so.

This tune was printed in the first series of PS 5 where it appears in a similar style as in the second series, except that the time signature is 6/8 rather than common time.

A crunluath a mach would generally be considered appropriate in this tune.

The Vaunting

PS 7 p193; K p60;

Binneas p28

Sources include Angus Mackay's book, Donald MacDonald's MS and Ceol Mor, and there is an article in The Voice magazine by James MacIntosh. All are close to the Mackay version, the main difference being that Mackay has no low G at end of first bars lines 2 & 3 of ground.

The Donald MacDonald setting was set for the Senior Competitions in 2011 and the notes from the judges' seminar appear on the PS website in the set tunes archive for that year.

Interpretations of this tune tend towards boldness, echoing the translation of the Gaelic name as boasting or arrogant, whether or not the introductory cadence E is played long or short. Consistent with this approach, the B double echos might be played quite crisply. Also, it is important to build the tempos in the variations in order to give the tune a dynamic feel.

The Young Laird of Dungallon's Salute

PS 10 p290; Binneas

p30

The tune is published in Angus Mackay's book, where it is essentially the same as in PS 10. It appears twice in the Campbell Canntaireachd, Volume 2, numbers 52 & 86 as Dungallon's Lament. It is also in the Gesto Canntaireachd where its title refers to it as a lament rather than as a salute, and certainly the tune could be interpreted as such, especially in the early variations. It seems unlikely that any settings other than that in PS 10 will be attempted.

The tune follows a two-pulse rhythm throughout the ground and variations. In the third last bar of the ground Angus MacKay writes F grip Low A E rather than F grip E as in the PS score. Also, the edre movement before the high A in the second last bar, taken from Angus Mackay, could be a misprint as it seems entirely out of place. All other sources give the note as a throw to high G from C, as elsewhere in lines 2 and 3 of the ground.

A crunluath a mach seems appropriate in this tune.

The tune also appears in Angus MacArthur's book, where there are quite a number of differences - C inst of B in bar 4 L1 and other differences in notes and expression. The notes before some high G movements in the ground are

different, and the notes at the end of the ground and variations also differ from the Piobaireachd Society score. Angus MacArthur's score as transcribed in The Music of Scotland The MacArthur MacGregor Manuscript of Piobaireachd (1820) is on the tune page.

William MacLean's transcription of the Gesto Canntaireachd setting is in the Music Archive on the College of Piping website, tune no. 5: 'MacLeod of Gesto's Lamentation'.