

## **Professor John Duff. Comments and questions.**

Rae Bell Who was the piper?

JD I was the one playing. I've looked everywhere – Donald MacLeod has a recording of it – it is called “In the Nave”, but he doesn't have the variations so I thought I would add the other two and catch something. It is a beautiful tune.

Robert Wallace. You went onto the high G's there. What was the thinking behind that because to me it sounded out of character with the rest of the tune.

JD I don't know. It was there, so I played it.

RW Is that Glen's setting? His own invention? It say's Glen's own composition.

JD It is Glen's setting. The only thing I changed is that there is the option of playing a low G or an A. I played an A and so to be consistent I kept it in, but as you can see in the Glen Manuscript it is low G. But I thought I would tell you the story. It is an interesting story and I appreciate very much the opportunity to be here and I'm looking forward to hearing piobaireachd over the next couple of days.

Malcolm White. I enjoyed that Professor. It is interesting. The Clan Donald Society have a service every year and the widow of the late Chief Air Commodore Ronald MacDonell attends, and in fact they will be at Culloden for the annual service on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> April.

Jack Taylor The Sister's Lament is one of the greats of the repertoire and it was fantastic to hear that.

Barnaby Brown I'd like to thank you hugely for bringing this to our attention . Robert just commented that the high G's were out of place and I'm looking at David Glen's score here. He has written the date he added it which is a little

confusing on page 16 of your hand-out. Variation 4 he has 20<sup>th</sup> March presumably that's 1906 and likewise the same date for the crunluath but he doesn't seem to be claiming authorship for variation 3 which is the first time the high G's occur. I'm fascinated. Was this something that David Glen did in other tunes or was his ability to add on variations here something unique, would it be frowned on by his contemporaries? Do you, or anyone have any views on that?

JD It is a good question. I don't know.

Duncan Watson In Salute to the Birth of Rory Mor in Glen's Collection Glen has added a taorluath and crunluath to that also and that would have been an invention of his own.

JT It is interesting that the Sister's Lament was set in 1932 which I just learned this morning because there is a clip from the Oban Times in that book (Shaw's). It was set along with the other tunes that have no taorluath or crunluath variations. Another tune which was set that year was the Big Spree which of course didn't originally have the variations attached to it. Kilberry mentions that variations have been attached to The Big Spree, by I think Kilberry, if I'm not mistaken, but he does not say anything about that there were variations around for The Sister's Lament, which had been done by David Glen. Just a point of interest.

JD I think what really spurred my interest was that I learned the tune a couple of years ago as I was doing some competing, and I offered it to the judge and the judge didn't want to hear it because it doesn't have all the variations. So it occurred to me that here is a beautiful piece of music that no one is going to learn because it doesn't have variations. And so, if nothing else, being here today is to introduce the other two variations.

Alan Forbes Just to say that in fact the tune was set as one of the Set Tunes about 3 or 4 years ago when the short tunes were all set in pairs of tunes. So it has been set, but you are right, it hasn't crept into the repertoire.

Robert Wallace It was actually played by Ian MacFadyen when he won the clasp in 1986 so there might be a recording of that.

Alan Forbes I don't have a recording of that but I have a recording of Ian MacFadyen playing it.

Jack Taylor Can I have a show of hands? Who thinks that the variations add something to the tune? It is about 50/50.

Robert Wallace Personally I don't think he has done a great job of them. I think it is a great piece and it needs a Donald MacLeod to come along and do something with it.

Roderick Cannon I quite agree. The variations are beautiful to hear. We ought to recognise I think that Piobaireachd went through creative development in stages. What we have in the early part of the tune may have been the original and somebody else has come along later and added variations, sometimes successfully and sometimes less so.

One tune which always strikes me is The Battle of Sherrifmuir which most unusually proceeds as far as the tripling variation and no further. I think it is possible to see where the composer has perhaps got stuck where it is not completely obvious what should be done next and possibly wisely he stopped.

In this tune I feel the same way. If you look at David Glen's variation 4, when you look at the second line of music in the third of those bars there is a tripling movement which goes BBBF, very nice, created by David Glen himself in Variation 4, but what are we going to do next with that phrase? How is he going to make a crunluath fosgailte out of a movement BBBF. It has occurred

to me that sometimes when we have a piobaireachd which does not possess later variations it could be because the original composer did not follow the rules of Piobaireachd completely and thought that was where he had to stop. But we should not necessarily be hidebound by the rules of Piobaireachd Composition.

JD I look at it from a young person's standpoint that what motivates the learning of Piobaireachd. I think I've been quite comfortable by learning it as it exists now, but I was struck by the comment and concerned that it might be a widespread thought.

Rae Bell I have one disrespectful question and I trust that you will take this in the humour in which it is intended. Did you add any water to the bath to get the resonance? I suggest you try Donald Ban MacCrimmon and Lament for the Children.

The second thing is that, I am a son of the manse, and I was brought up to believe that the Scots were Christians, and this was shattered when I visited the jail in Inveraray to discover how treacherous and bloodthirsty the Scots were and you have added to my impression by telling this bloodthirsty tale.

JD When I first presented this to my faculty, and, knowing my faculty very well, I thought they might not want to listen to me after 10 years so I ought to make it as interesting as I possibly could for them.

Peter McCalister Quite a few years ago there was a recording played here of Piobaireachd played on the piano by a classically trained experienced musician. Have you ever tried it on the trombone?

JD Actually I haven't.

JT That might be a good note to finish on. I'm sure you would like to join with me in thanking John for his excellent presentation.

