

## **The Red Hand In The MacDonald's Arms (PS book 10 p298)**

The author and date of composition of this tune are unknown. It has been suggested to be a relatively late composition but comparisons with 'The Cameron's Gathering' might suggest an earlier origin. It has also been compared to 'The MacGregor's Salute' with which it shares similarities.

No MS sources pre-dating the 20<sup>th</sup> century have been found.

The main sources are:

Angus MacKay's Book  
General Thomason's Ceol Mor  
David Glen's 'Collection Of Ancient Piobaireachd'

The structure of the tune in MacKay has been queried. The ground and the first two variations have lines of six bars each whereas the remaining variations have two lines of six bars and one of four.

The 6:6:4 structure is close to what we now call Secondary Piobaireachd and this has been achieved in the Society's publication, by removing the middle two bars of line 3, although the original structure is still printed with the queried bars enclosed in brackets.

MacKay has the final note of Var 1: Line 2: Bar 1 as 'E'; Thomason has 'F' as has the PS publication. 'F' is certainly more consistent with the ground.

Glen's publication follows MacKay but again substituting 'F' for 'E' while also casting the tune in 2/4 rather than 4/4.

It is not unlikely that MacKay's 'E' was a typographical error.

A version of the tune exists in which the open birds are played as double echoes in all but variation 2 and some of the taorluaths in the taorluath variation are replaced with pointed GDE beats. This version featured in a radio broadcast by Wm. M. MacDonald in the 1960's and has been played at the Northern Meeting