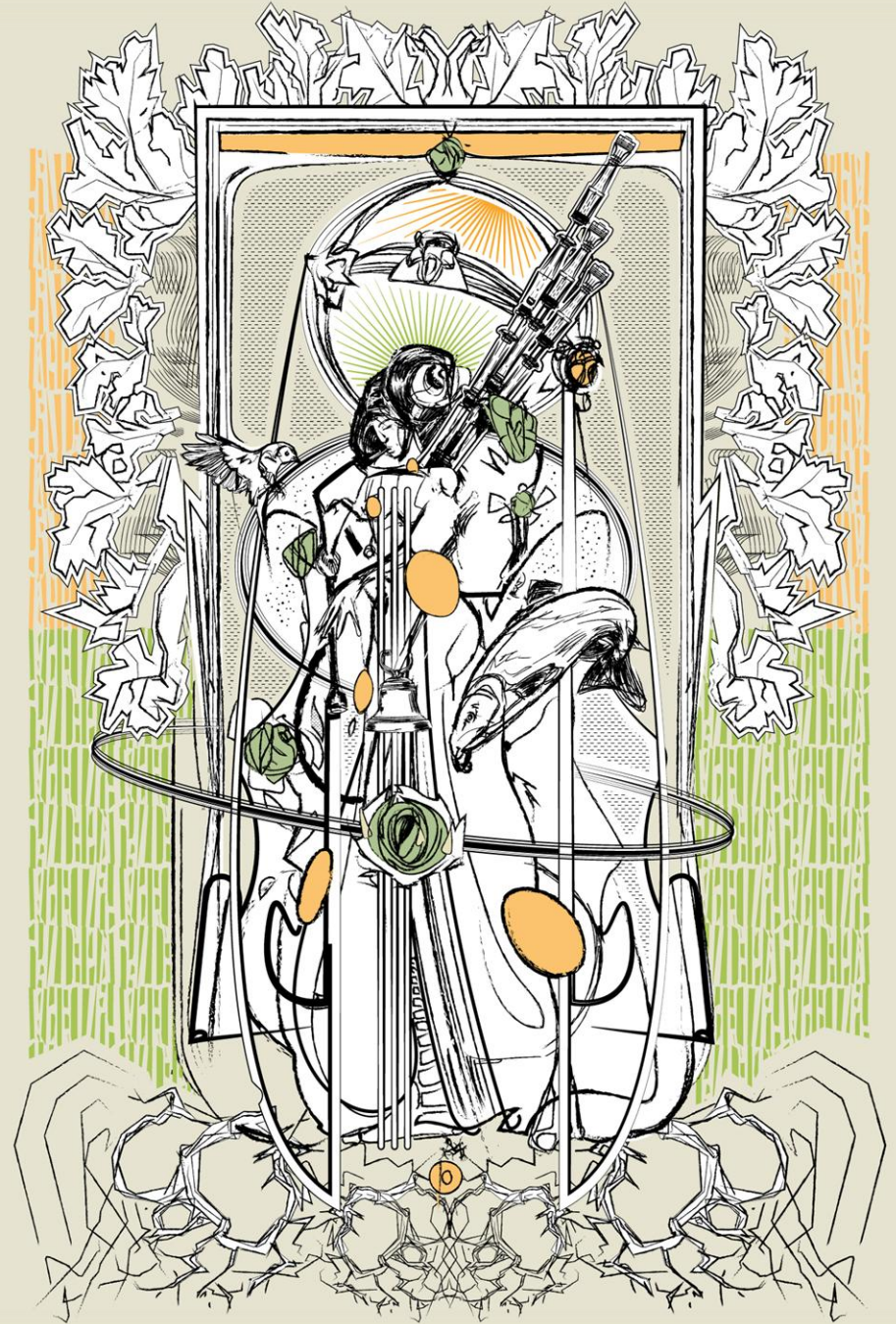


# Let Piobaireachd Flourish

John Mulhearn  
Piobaireachd Society Conference  
28<sup>th</sup> March 2026



# From Boreraig to Broomielaw

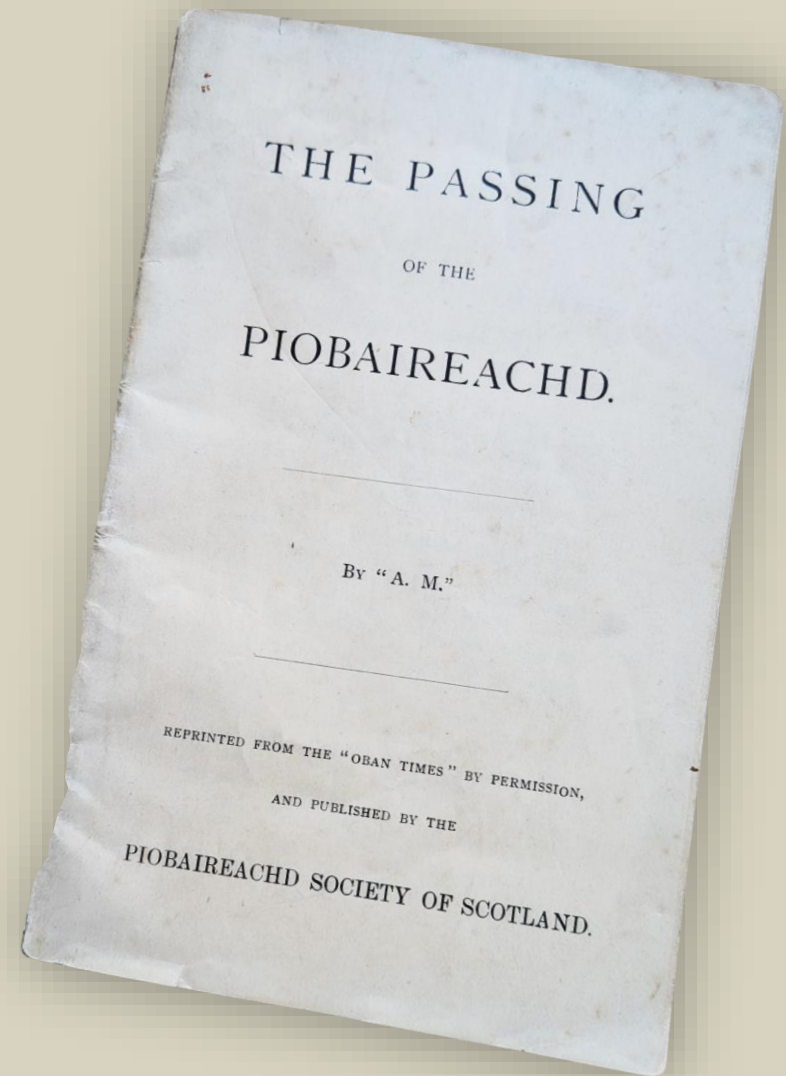


Has piobaireachd flourished?



*“Men are dying, tunes are  
perishing, knowledge is  
waning”*

*(The Passing of the Piobaireachd, 1903)*



# Piobaireachd Society Set Tunes 1987

1. The Piobaireachd Society recommend the following list of set tunes for 1987.

## A. SENIOR COMPETITIONS

1. The Lament for the Harp Tree — Bk. 12. K.
2. Lament for Donald Ban MacCrimmon — Bk. 2. K.
3. Donald Gruamach's March — Bk. 2. K.
4. The Stewarts' White Banner — Bk. 7.
5. The Lament for the Union — Bk. 6. K.
6. The Blue Ribbon — Bk. 5. K.
7. Craigellachie, The Grant's Gathering Bk. 6. K.

Competitors to choose 4 tunes, one of which they will play

## THE GOLD MEDALS

Isabel MacKay — 5th  
The M

Is more repertoire in circulation?



*Are there more masters?*



Is knowledge more widely diffused?

“...barbarous apathy...”?

A large, gnarled tree with white blossoms stands in a field of green grass and yellow wildflowers. The tree's branches are thick and twisted, with many small white flowers and green leaves. The background is a clear blue sky with a few wispy clouds. The overall scene is bright and sunny.

Has piobaireachd flourished as an art?



# The Piobaireachd Society

[GO](#)[MEMBERS LIBRARY](#)[SET TUNES](#)[FREE LIBRARY PREVIEW](#)

## SOCIETY MEMBER LOGIN

You are logged in as John Mulhearn.

[Account](#)[Logout](#)

## New Compositions by Members

The Society wishes to encourage the composition of new music and this space on the website is offered to members keen to publish their works online.

Tunes are not scrutinised or edited and are printed as sent to the Society. The fact that a tune is printed here does not mean it has found favour with, or been approved by, the Society nor does the Society accept any responsibility for errors. Any queries should be addressed to relevant composers and not the Society.

Tunes, preferably in PDF format, should be sent to [secretary@piobaireachd.co.uk](mailto:secretary@piobaireachd.co.uk)

A good quality recording may be sent with the score.

| Title                                        | Description                                                                                                                                           | Listen | Document                                                                              |
|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Lament for Professor Howard William Chandler | Composed and played by Stuart Samson.                                                                                                                 |        |  |
| Lament for Jim Butler                        | Composed and played by Karen McCrindle-Warren who writes "Lament for Jim Butler" 17th June 1942 – 8th March 2022 I first met Jim when I was compiling |        |  |

# Active Creation and Innovation

SUPPLEMENTARY 'B'  
SUPPLEMENTARY 'B'

# VARIATIONS ON THE URLAR

| IN THE KEY OF:  |   |   |    |   |  |
|-----------------|---|---|----|---|--|
| G               | A | B | D  | E |  |
| A               | B | C | E  | F |  |
| D               | E | F | A' | B |  |
| Full Pipe Scale |   |   |    |   |  |

|                     |          |
|---------------------|----------|
| SUIBHAL             | S & D- 1 |
| TAORLUATH FOSGAILTE | S & D- 2 |
| CRUNLUATH FOSGAILTE | S & D- 3 |

|                   |          |
|-------------------|----------|
| TAORLUATH BREBACH | S & D- 4 |
| CRUNLUATH BREBACH | S & D- 5 |

|                  |       |      |
|------------------|-------|------|
| DITHIS           | S & D | - 6  |
| LEUMLUATH        | S & D | - 7  |
| TAORLUATH        | S & D | - 8  |
| TAORLUATH A MACH |       | - 9  |
| CRUNLUATH        | S & D | - 10 |
| CRUNLUATH A MACH |       | - 11 |

Should attention be turned to supporting the evolution of the language in which new music is written?

1

(a) (b)

4

(a) (b)

6 8 D 7 8

(a) (b)

2

(a)

5

(a)

9 10

(a) (b)

3

(a)

11

(a)



## CEOL MOR COMPOSING COMPETITION

As part of Glasgow, European City of Culture 1990, William Grant and Sons Ltd are offering prizes for the composition of a new piece of Ceol Mor, the classical music of the Highland Bagpipe. The following are the details:

1. The tune must be a new one, specially composed for this occasion.
2. Each entry must consist of a clearly written score together with a cassette recording of the tune. The playing can be on the pipe or a goose, and need not necessarily be played by the composer. The quality and standard of the playing will not be taken into account.
3. The duration of the piece, including any repeats, should be between 5 and 20 minutes.
4. A note of the name and address of the composer must be pinned to the score. No words other than musical directions may be written on the score or on any part of the cassette. There must be no speech or song on the cassette.

5. Composers may submit as many entries as they wish. There is no entry fee. Entries will not be returned.
6. THE COMPOSITION NEED NOT NECESSARILY BE IN THE TRADITIONAL PIOBAIREACHD FORM. IT IS FELT THAT AN ATTEMPT SHOULD BE MADE AT THIS TIME TO DEVELOP SOMETHING NEW. PREFERENCE IN THIS COMPETITION THEREFORE WILL BE GIVEN TO AN INNOVATION, PROVIDED IT CAN STILL BE ACCEPTED AND RECOGNISED AS CLASSICAL MUSIC FOR THE HIGHLAND BAGPIPE.
7. Traditional piobaireachd of course is not debarred.
8. The tune may be written to be played with orchestra or other backing, but it must also be capable of being played as a solo performance and will be judged entirely on that basis.
9. The winning tune will be called "The Glasgow Piobaireachd".
10. The winning composer will receive a prize of £750 and the custody of a trophy for one year. There will be second and third prizes of £300 and £200 respectively.
11. Entries should be sent to the College of Piping, 16-24 Otago Street, Glasgow, G12 8JH, to arrive not later than January 31st 1990. All entries will be acknowledged.
12. The winning tunes will be performed at a concert to be held in late spring, and also at times later in the Year of Culture.



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5. Composers may submit as many entries as they wish. There is no entry fee. Entries will not be returned.
  6. THE COMPOSITION NEED NOT NECESSARILY BE IN THE TRADITIONAL PIOBAIREACHD FORM. IT IS FELT THAT AN ATTEMPT SHOULD BE MADE AT THIS TIME TO DEVELOP SOMETHING NEW. PREFERENCE IN THIS COMPETITION THEREFORE WILL BE GIVEN TO AN INNOVATION, PROVIDED IT CAN STILL BE ACCEPTED AND RECOGNISED AS CLASSICAL MUSIC FOR THE HIGHLAND BAGPIPE.
  7. Traditional piobaireachd of course is not debarred.

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*Scotch Whisky*

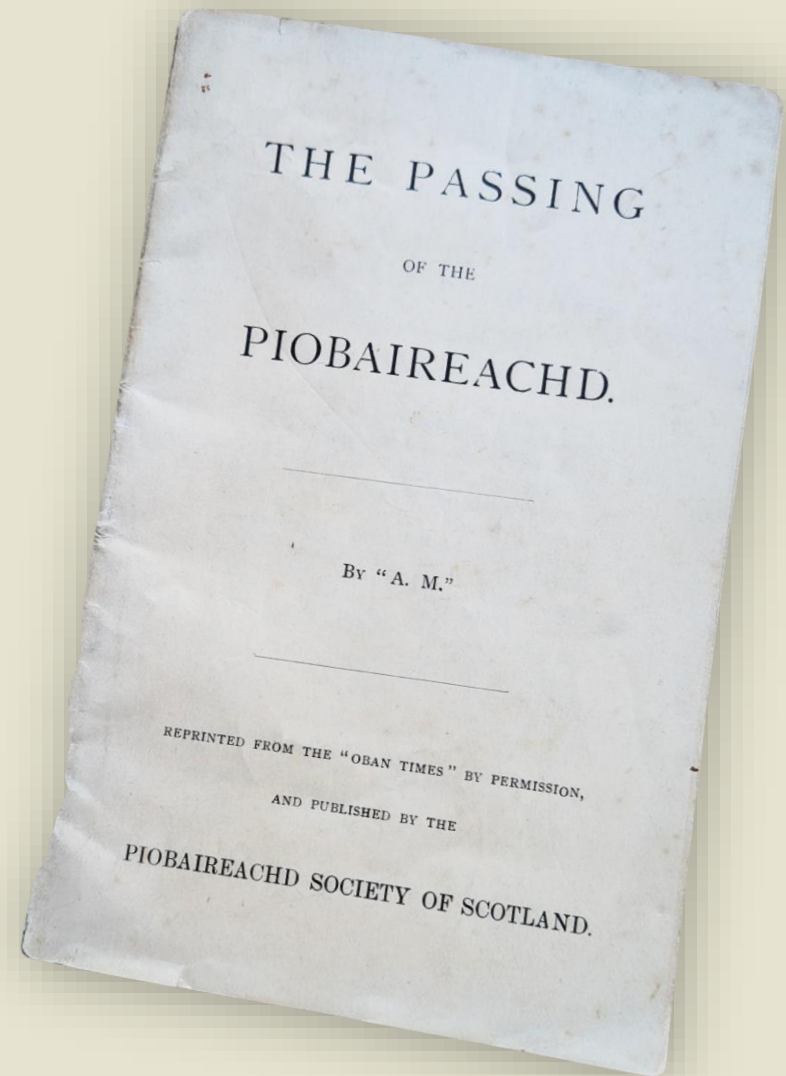
# Performance Contexts





*“...the fault lies, not with  
the present-day professional  
piper, but with those on  
whose patronage the piper  
is dependent.”*

*(The Passing of the Piobaireachd, 1903)*



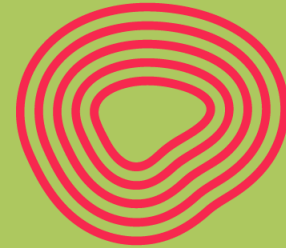
# Patronage – Then and Now



# The Limits of Modern Support



ALBA | CHRUTHACHAIL



**PRS**  
Foundation

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# Dedicated Fund for Creative Work

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- Time to compose
- Time to study
- Time to engage with the archives
- Time to promote
- Time to try things that may not immediately succeed

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# Piobaireachd Artist in Residence

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- Engage deeply with the repertoire and its sources
- Develop new work
- Explore alternative approaches to performance
- Contribute, perhaps, to teaching and discussion within the community

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