

Roderick Cannon's
A Bibliography of Bagpipe Music

John Donald Publishers Ltd
Edinburgh 1980

An update by Geoff Hore
2008

The writing in **black font** is from *A Bibliography of Bagpipe Music*. The update comments are in **blue font**.

If anyone has any information that can assist in adding to this update please contact the writer at geoff.hore@xtra.co.nz.

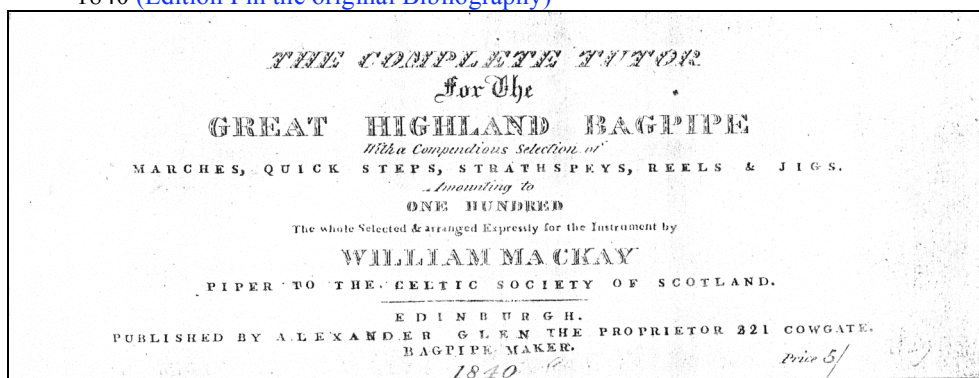
308 A Complete Tutor for the Great Highland Bagpipe by William Mackay

Cannon located 3 editions of this book in his research. These were:

I 1840
VI 1871
VII 1878.

The only known edition V at that time was held in the Mitchell Library, Glasgow but had gone missing. The writer has found one in a private collection in New Zealand.

1 1840 (Edition I in the original Bibliography)



Scanned image from Roderick Cannon.

Title; pp [1-2], 'index Gaelic and English'; pp [3-4], instructions; p5, scale and fingering chart; p [6] blank; pp 7-56, tunes (100).

Euing Library, Glasgow University.*
3.6 x 9.5".

An unusual feature of the book is that the grace notes are mostly as semiquavers instead of demi-semiquavers. The musical settings are all extremely simple – in most cases grace notes are introduced only singly and then only to divide two melody notes of the same pitch. The few tunes which contain doublings seem to have been borrowed from Donald MacDonald's collections (nos 304 and 306 above). The instructions are correspondingly brief, and there is a remarkable number of spelling mistakes.

William MacKay is known to us from this book, and from the records of the Highland Society's piobaireachd competitions held in Edinburgh in the early part of the nineteenth century. In these records he is first mentioned in 1811 as 'William MacKay, Inverness-shire Militia', and then in 1820 as 'late Pipe-Major to the Inverness-shire Militia, now piper to the Celtic Society'. He won the fourth prize for piobaireachd playing in 1811, the second prize in 1816 and the first in 1820. As a former first prize-winner (and therefore eligible only for the

first prize again and not for any lesser prize), he competed again in 1821, 1822 and 1835, but without success. He was one of those who responded to the call for pipe music to be written down 'scientifically' - i.e. in staff notation - and received money prizes for so doing on at least three occasions, in 1820, 1822 and 1823. The music he submitted in 1820 was however criticised as not properly notated and it was stated that to qualify for the prize he must mark the clef properly 'and also the grace notes etc.' (These details are quoted in Angus MacKay, *Ancient Piobaireachd*, 1838, pp 18-19; A. Campbell, *The Kilberry Book of Ceol Mor*, 1948, p 11; and in an unsigned 'notice' in the *Piping Times*, June 1972.)

He was one of the three pipers who played at the landing of King George IV at Leith in 1822. There is extant a letter of MacDonell of Glengarry referring to this event which says that at the time MacKay was piper to Mr MacDonald of Castle Tyrum in Moidart, proprietor of Arasaig. (Information from Mr. J. E. Scott).

The dates of his birth and death, and his background, are all unknown. The writer in the *Piping Times* states that 'his family came from the Reay country' and that 'it has been said that he was a son of John MacKay of Raasay [i.e. a brother of Angus MacKay, author of the *Ancient Piobaireachd*] but this his family denied'. The sources of these statements are not given, however, nor is it even made clear which of the two families denied the connection.

Baptie, who incidentally gives the correct date, 1840, for William MacKay's collection, calls him a 'contemporary writer', implying that he was still alive in 1894; but Baptie is notoriously unreliable in matters of detail.

The author of this book should not be confused with another William MacKay (1810-1884), pipe-major of the 74th Regiment, composer of 'William MacKay's farewell to the 74th' and several other tunes.

2 ND (Not in the original Bibliography)

Refer comments below.

3 ND (Not in the original Bibliography)

Nothing is known of edition 3 at this time.

4 ND (Not in the original Bibliography)

Nothing is known of edition 4 at this time.

A fragment of an edition exists in the private collection of Neil McMillan of Invercargill that consists of the following:

- 1) Page iii and iv Preface.
- 2) Un-numbered pages; 'Clar-Innseadh' (Index).
- 3) Un-numbered pages; 'Instructions'.
- 4) Pages 5 and 6; 'Scale for the Bagpipe' and Exercises.
- 5) Pages 7-14, 17, 18, 21 and 22; music.

Item 1) above is the last two pages of a longer Preface and at the end it has '30. West Register Street, Edinburgh, October 1846'. The Preface is similar to that in editions 5 and 6, however in these latter two editions (which are identical) they have used new plates and added more information.

The Index in Item 2) has been printed from the same plates that were used in editions 5 and 6.

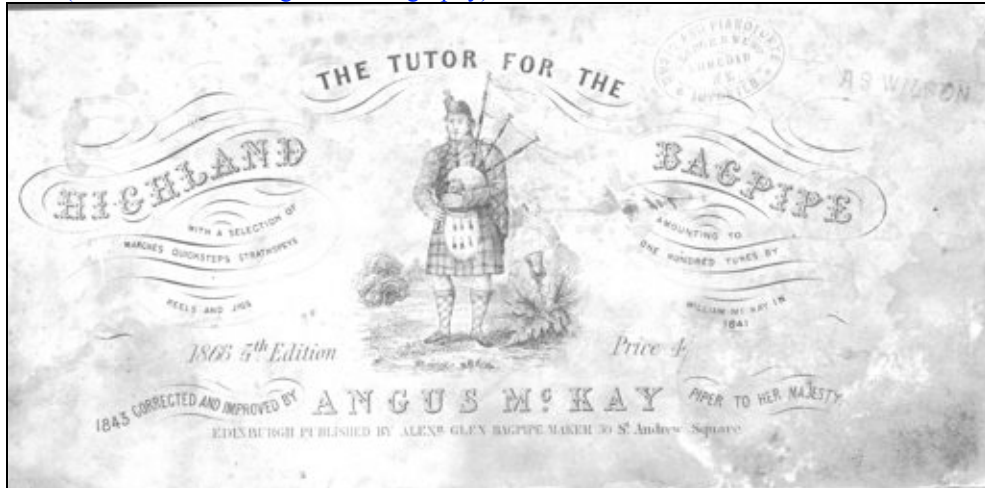
The Instructions in Item 3) are completely different from those in the later two editions. Likewise, the Scale for the Bagpipe and Exercises are different.

All the music in this fragment is identical to that in both editions 5 and 6.

At this point it is impossible to be certain if this fragment is edition 2, 3 or 4. The present writer has not seen a copy of edition 1 but from the description provided by Cannon we can be sure this fragment was published later.

5

1866 (Edition V in the original Bibliography)



title; pp [i], ii-vi, Preface; p[1], index in Gaelic, headed 'Clar-Innseadh'; p [2], index in English; pp 3-5, Instructions; p 6, Exercises; pp7-56, tunes (100);

Mitchell Library, Glasgow.

Cannon reports this book is now missing.

Private Collection.

Sir Ian McKay, Wellington.

The Author's Collection.

Photocopy.

6

1871 (Edition VI in the original Bibliography)



Note: Under the sticker on the bottom right hand corner are: 'Price 4/-', and after MacKay, 'Piper to Her Majesty', and after Bagpipe Makers is '16 Calton Hill'.

title; pp [i], ii-iv, Preface; p[1], index in Gaelic, headed 'Clar-Innseadh'; p [2], index in English; pp 3-5, Instructions; p 6, Exercises; pp7-56, tunes (100);

Private collection* (Dr. D. R. Hannay). Hard covers, leather spine (not original). 4.3 x 9.3". With former owner's signature and date 1st March 1876.

Black Gate Museum, New Castle.

Private Collection.

Neil MacMillan, Invercargill.

The Author's Collection.

Photocopy.

The text of this edition has been radically revised. The instructional matter, entirely different from that of 1, is identical with that of Angus MacKay's *Piper's Assistant* (no. 310 below) and evidently printed from the same plates. Some of the tunes have been re-engraved, e.g. with the addition of extra parts, but most are from the original plates, much altered. Melody notes

have been altered, grace notes changed to demi-semi quavers throughout, and many more grace notes, doublings etc have been inserted. There are many visible signs of the alterations, as for example, irregular spacings of notes, trill signs not placed over the notes to which they refer (p 9), grace note groups spanning bar lines (p 42), and grace notes upside down in some places. A few grace notes have survived unaltered as semiquavers on pp 24, 43, 49. All this was presumably done by Angus MacKay, and indeed most of the altered tunes appear again, from new plates, in the *Piper's Assistant*.

As to dates, the title-page of this edition implies that the first edition was published in 1841 and the revision carried out in 1843. The first of these dates is, however, incorrect and this must cast some suspicion also on the second. Presumably the plate of the present title-page was engraved not in 1843 but some considerable time afterwards. It is an entirely different design from the title-page of edition I and has a figure of a piper closely similar to that in Alexander Glen's *Caledonian Repository* (no. 313 below, edition 11). Moreover, on a close scrutiny it seems to the present writer that it may have been altered some time after it was first engraved. The words 'in 1841' do not quite seem to belong to the design: the letters IN are fractionally too large and the date very nearly impinges on an ornamental detail immediately below. Without having copies of any earlier editions for comparison, it is impossible to say more, except to repeat that the authority for the date 1843 is not known.

It does seem reasonable to suppose that the revised edition came not long after the first edition, which to any piper must have seemed a very unsatisfactory production; and before the *Piper's Assistant*, which is stated, though not proven, to have been published also in 1843. For as already mentioned, nearly all of the revised tunes were incorporated into Angus MacKay's book with little or no further alteration, yet all completely re-engraved on new plates. If the new plates had been made first, it would have been pointless to go to the trouble of altering the old ones. This conclusion is reinforced by the otherwise rather ambiguous wording of an Alexander Glen advertisement issued in 1854 (it appears in the first edition of MacLachlan's *Piper's Assistant*, no. 312 below). Among the items of music for sale are '1. Bagpipe Tutor, containing 100 Tunes, corrected by Angus McKay, Piper to Her Majesty' price 4s; 2. 'Do., second edition, containing 155 Tunes, edited by Angus McKay' price 8s. The first of these is an edition of the present work and the second is Angus MacKay's *Piper's Assistant*. So Angus MacKay's collection was regarded by the publisher as the second edition of the corrected version of William's. Since the two books continued on sale together, I prefer to classify them as separate works. [For further comment refer to Angus MacKay's Piper's Assistant \(No 310\).](#)

7 1878. [\(Edition VII in the original Bibliography\)](#)

Title as VI.

Edinburgh published by David Glen, bagpipe maker, 8 Greenside Place.

At left: 7th Edition, 1878. At right: Price 4/-

title; p [1], Clar-innseadh; p [2], index; pp 3-6, exercises, pp 7-56, music; pp 57-63, 'Supplement of Bagpipe Tutor'.

Private Collection.*

Bound up with several other books, the whole volume titled 'Pipe Music. D.G.' The whole set evidently belonged to David Glen himself. It contains many MS notes and some indications that it was used in the preparation of David Glen's Collection of Highland Bagpipe Music (No. 316 below).

This seventh edition is advertised for sale in 1881 in the first edition of *David Glen's Highland Bagpipe Tutor* (no. 322 below), but it is not listed in, for example, part 1 of edition II of *David Glen's Collection* (no. 316 below), 1886. A large proportion of the tunes were incorporated in *David Glen's Collection*, books 5 and 6, first published 1889-90. Manson confirms that the work was out of print by 1901.

[Rev 00 \(9 September 2008\).](#)

[Rev 01 \(22 November 2008\).](#)

[Rev 02 \(21 February 2011\).](#)

Adds editorial comment from the original Bibliography that was inadvertently omitted and changes the edition numbering from Roman to Arabic numerals. Adds scanned image of edition 1 received from Roderick Cannon and adds the copyright notice.

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