

R Roderick Cannon's
A Bibliography of Bagpipe Music

John Donald Publishers Ltd
Edinburgh 1980

An update by Geoff Hore
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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.

310 The Piper's Assistant by Angus MacKay

Two different editions of this book were located by Cannon during his research:

I c1843
IV 1872

Recently the 3rd edition was located in the College of Piping Museum, Glasgow and this has helped a little in resolving the publication history. When Cannon carried out his research into this book in the 1960s and 70s, he could not accurately determine when edition 1 was published. Even now 40 years later it is still in doubt.

It is important to understand the publication history of William MacKay's *Complete Tutor* (No 308) as it is closely linked with this book. Cannon found that the *Complete Tutor* was first published in 1840 and that Angus MacKay revised it in about 1843. Neither he nor the present writer has seen any book that purports to be the second edition. Cannon commented on edition 1 thus:

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.

Later he compared edition 1 against edition 6 and had the following to say:

The text of this edition (6th) 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*.

The present writer has a photocopy of edition 5 (1866) and it appears to be identical to edition 6 (1871). Both of these editions came out years after the death of Angus MacKay (1859). Cannon added:

It does seem reasonable to suppose that the revised edition (of the *Tutor*) came not long after the first edition and before the *Piper's Assistant*, which is stated, though not proven, to have been published also in 1843. ...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)¹. 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 [Wm MacKay's Tutor](#) 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's². Since the two books continued on sale together, I prefer to classify them as separate works.

¹The same words are on a price list in Angus MacKay's *Piper's Assistant* that has Alexander Glen's address at 30 St Andrew Square, Edinburgh. This price list can be dated between 1847 (when Alexander Glen moved premises) and 1851 (when edition 3 came out).

²It may be that this second book is actually the second edition of Angus MacKay's *Piper's Assistant* - Cannon is right, the wording in the price list is ambiguous. 'Do' is an abbreviation for ditto and this indicates that the second book has the same title as above. However, the present writer has seen a number of advertisements publishers have included with other bagpipe music books from the 19th century and accuracy of the descriptions can often be questioned. This may be just another example.

It can be seen that there is a definite link between William MacKay's *Tutor* and Angus' *Piper's Assistant*. The *Tutor* has seven known editions of which four (1, 5, 6 and 7) have been located and the *Piper's Assistant* has four editions and 1, 3 and 4 have been located. It is possible that edition 1 could be edition 2.

The title-page in the *Piper's Assistant* gives the publisher's address as 30 West Register Street, Edinburgh. However, a price list glued inside the front cover has Glen's address at 30 St Andrew Square. On page 32 of the *Bibliography*, Cannon provides details of Alexander Glen and the addresses from which he traded. In 1840 he was at 321 Cowgate and it is there he published MacKay's *Tutor*. In 1842 he moved to 250 Cowgate and by 1844 had two businesses, one as a furniture dealer at 250 Cowgate and the other as a bagpipe maker at 30 West Register Street. In 1847 he amalgamated both businesses and moved to 30 St Andrew Square.

1843 is the earliest date the *Piper's Assistant* could have been published as that is the year when Angus MacKay was appointed as Piper to Her Majesty as proclaimed on the title-page. An early bibliographer, W L Manson asserted the date of publication was 1843 but Cannon has serious doubts. We know that he moved out of 30 West Register Street in 1847 and it had to have been published before that date. The fact that he moved into 30 West Register in 1844 is the earliest date the *Piper's Assistant* could have been published.

We now have to consider whether the book that Cannon located is edition 1 or 2. Unlike editions 3 and 4 this book has no indication as to where it fits into the publishing chronology. We therefore have to glean as much as we can from this and other books. Because Alexander Glen published editions 3 and 4, and called them so, it is perfectly reasonable to assume there were two he considered were editions 1 and 2. One fact that cannot be disputed is the time frame during which these first two editions were published. As discussed above, the earliest date is 1844 and the last possible date is 1851 (the date of edition 3).

We now have to consider why a book would have two addresses that cross a well-defined date line. The present writer has two theories. The initial edition of the book could have been published whilst Glen was at 30 West Register Street (ie prior to 1847). Then, after he moved to his new address at St Andrew Square, he decided to publish a new edition and as he still had the plates for edition 1 he decided to use them and to show his new address by inserting the latest price list. If correct then the book Cannon discovered would be edition 2.

However, there is another possibility. Maybe Glen began publication of the book whilst at West Register but it was not completed until he was at the new address. He then would have had to come up with a means of informing the public of his new address and by having the new price list inserted this would solve all his problems. If this were the case then the book Cannon discovered could be edition 1 or 2 but they both would have appeared between 1847 and 1851. The down side of this argument is that editions 1, 2 and 3 would have been published in a four-year period.

Another consideration is the numbering system used on the title-page. Angus MacKay numbered each of his books by hand and this can be seen at the lower right hand corner of the title-page. The book located by Cannon has 558 and the one in Lewis Turrell's Collection has 530. At the time of writing

no others with similar numbers are known but it does seem that editions 1 and 2 will be numbered. Edition 3 and 4 are not.

It is not known at what point the numbering starts and finishes. If we believe it starts at number 1, then this implies that around 600 books were printed. It is almost unbelievable that such a high number would be printed in the late 1840s and then another edition in 1851.

There is also the matter of cost of producing such a high number. We know that edition IV of Donald MacDonald's *Collection* (306 above) was published in 1841 and had only 25 copies printed; this was only 2 or 3 years before MacKay's *Piper's Assistant* was published. On pages 65 and 66 of the *Bibliography*, Cannon provides details of an account book belonging to Thomas Glen (brother of Alexander). In this there are four entries relating to edition IV of Donald MacDonald's book mentioned above. These are:

Purchasing 24 music Plaits for pipe book	£1-11s-6d
Printing 25 Pipe Books of MacDonalds	11s-3d
1 Rime (Ream) fine music paper for tuttors ¹	5s-3d
Binding 23 of MacDonald's Pipe Tuttors	<u>4s-9 ½d</u>
Total	£2-12s-9 ½d

¹This paper was for 75 violin tuttors and 25 bagpipe tuttors and cost £1-1s-0d. That figure has been divided by 4 to arrive at the amount quoted.

Therefore, it cost just over 2s to produce each book.

If Alexander Glen two years later printed 600 books at 2s per book, that means the total expenditure for the project would be £60. A huge financial outlay and it is doubtful that even the famous Angus MacKay name would be sufficient for Alexander Glen to take such a risk. One would doubt that in those days before the advent of the pipe band there would have been anywhere near that number of prospective purchasers. The present writer believes that the numbering started at a higher number but at present it is impossible to be more precise.

One last point that needs to be considered more closely is the link between the different editions of the two books to determine if it is possible that an edition of one book might have also been deemed by the publishers as an edition of the other. Obviously if we had access to any of these unknown editions the picture would become a lot clearer but for the time being we will have to make do with those that we do have and a little lateral thinking.

The matrix below lists the editions and dates known at the moment:

Date	Wm MacKay <i>Complete Tutor</i>	A. MacKay <i>Piper's Assistant</i>
1840	1 st	-
c1843	2 nd	-
1844-50	-	1 st
1844-50	-	2 nd
1851		3 rd
1844-65	3 rd	-
1844-65	4 th	-
1866	5 th	-
1871	6 th	-
1872	-	4 th
1878	7 th	

Edition 1 of the *Tutor* can be dated accurately from the date on the title-page. Edition 2, of which no known copy exists, appeared in about 1843. If later editions can be used as a guide, the original plates were amended by Angus MacKay and used to print this 2nd edition. At some point between 1844 and 1865 editions 3 and 4 were published and once again, these books have not been located. Editions 5 and 6 appeared 1866 and 1871 and these are identical and more than likely printed from the same plates as edition 2. The present writer has not seen edition 7 and it is not known if the music is the same as earlier editions, however, it does have more pages of music added at the end.

Angus MacKay decided, most likely during the editing of edition 2 of the *Tutor*, to publish a book in his own name. This duly happened at some time after 1844 and was called the *Piper's Assistant* and Cannon states that the first 56 pages are nearly identical to the *Tutor*. He noted that the settings are the same and that Angus had not used the updated plates from the *Tutor*, but instead had new plates made. This makes it almost certain that the *Tutor* edition 2 came out some time before the *Piper's Assistant* edition 1. At some time after edition 1 of the *Piper's Assistant* and before edition 3 in 1851, a second edition was published. Edition 4 was published in 1872.

An advertisement in an 1854 price list published by Alexander Glen refers to a book with 155 tunes as the second edition of the *Tutor*. The only known book published around this time with 155 tunes is the *Piper's Assistant*. In other words there is no known edition of the *Tutor* with 155 tunes. It is difficult to perceive that a publisher would consider one book as another edition if they two have different titles, especially when the *Piper's Assistant* does not proclaim this to be so. It is believed that the writer of the advertisement made an error when the 155 page book was given the same title as the *Tutor* and that it was actually referring to the second edition of the *Piper's Assistant*.

The present writer believes the *Tutor* and the *Piper's Assistant* are independent publications although the latter has been directly copied from the former. By 1851 it is evident that Alexander Glen was specifying edition numbers on both books and this weighs heavily towards believing that this had always been the case. At some time in the future an edition of both books might turn up that conclusively proves this point one way or the other.

Cannon's edition numbering has been changed from Roman to Arabic numerals.

1 1843



title; pp I-III, index in Gaelic; pp IV-VI, index in English; pp VII-IX, instructions; p X, exercises; pp 1-85, tunes 1-155; p 86, 'Errata'.

National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh.*

(Glen collection). Boards. One fly-leaf at each end. 4.0 x 9.2". The binding, which like the rest of the book is very much worn and discoloured, may possibly be original. Pasted inside the front cover is an Alexander Glen price list, giving Glen's address as 30 St. Andrew Square, not as on the title-page. The change of address took place c. 1847 (Post Office Directory).

This copy is numbered and signed by the Editor himself, thus: on the title-page, lower left, over a printed dotted line, 'MacKay'; lower right, the number 558 in the same faded brown ink.

Private Collection.

Lewis Turrell, Auckland.

The Author's Collection.

Photocopy.

Although it cannot be seen in the above scanning the price is 8/-. Pages 1-56 of the music correspond closely with the 56 pages of William MacKay's collection (no. 308) as revised by Angus MacKay. Although there are 104 tunes, as against 100 in William MacKay's book, these are nearly all the same and occur on the same numbered pages. Musical settings are

identical or nearly so, but the tunes have all been re-engraved on new plates, and the new pages 57-86 are engraved in the same style. The 'Errata' on page 86 are in fact extra parts to three of the tunes of the first section.

Manson gives the date 1843, and since the title-page is undated we have only his authority for it. It is in fact the earliest possible year, since it was only in 1843 that Angus MacKay became piper to Queen Victoria (see Piobaireachd Society collection, vol 10, introduction, p iii). The latest possible year would be 1847, when Alexander Glen's address changed to 30 St. Andrew Square.

This or a subsequent edition was advertised at the same price in 1854 (see notes on William MacKay's collection, No. 308 above).

2 No known examples of the 2nd edition have been located, however see above.

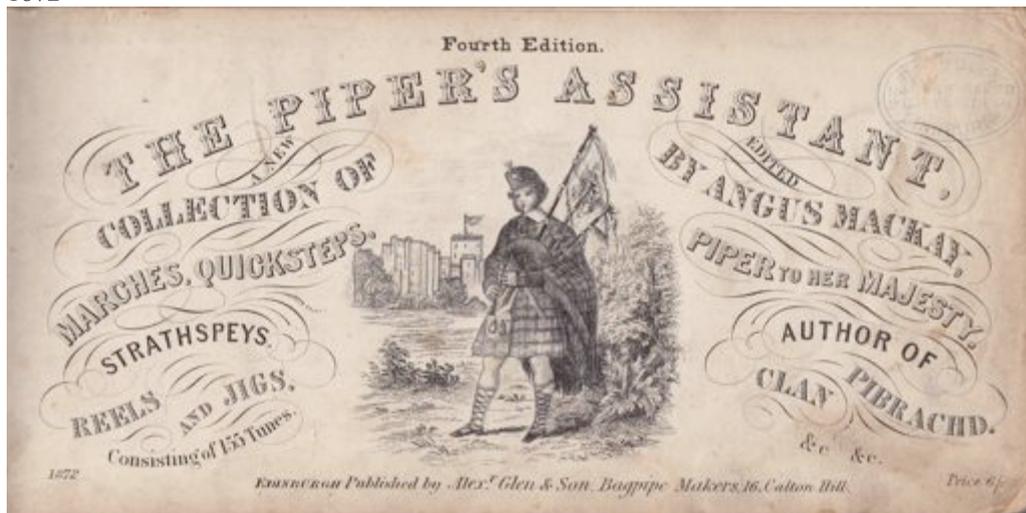
3 1851 (Not in original Bibliography)



Contents as in 4 below. (This book was not inspected in detail and close examination might detect differences.)

College of Piping Museum, Glasgow

4 1872



price list, title; pp [i], ii-vi, preface, pp I-X, 1-86, as I above.

National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh.*

Library binding. 4.2 x 9.4".

[The Author's Collection.](#)

In spite of the title, this edition is very similar to the first. The title-page is in fact from the original plate, with extra words added, and the original signature and number replaced by date and price respectively.

The preface, a brief collection of historical notes on the pipes, the clan system, and Highland dress, is identical with that printed in Alex. Glen's *Caledonian Repository*, 2nd ed., 1870 (no. 313 below).

The selection of tunes remains the same and there are only occasional small changes, mainly for the worse. Thus the page number VII is misprinted 3 VII, and the tune title 'Briogais Mhic Ruairi' (p 2) becomes 'Briogais Mhic Ruadh'.

The book was advertised as late as 1886 at the same price. Perhaps by then it had been reissued under David Glen's imprint. It does not appear in an advertisement of 1890, however, and Manson confirms that it was out of print by 1901. A large proportion of the tunes were incorporated in revised form in *David Glen's Collection* (no. 316 below), books 5 and 6, first published 1889-90.

Rev 00. (9 September 2008)

Rev 01 (6 October 2009)

Rev 02 (6 February 2011)

Adds details of edition 3 and updates the comments.

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