

# THE MAID of EDRACHAOLIS

There are two jigs in our collection of Alex MacIver's music, **THE MAID OF EDRACHAOLIS** and **JOE KING**. Both tunes have four parts and while we know why Alex named a jig for Joe the background to the Maid required some investigation.

The Maid was played by the 214 Band usually linked with Paddy's Leather Breeches. Both these tunes remain long in the memory and perhaps in our personal repertoires even now. We have two recordings of the band in BBC radio broadcasts, 1964 and 1968, where the second includes The Black Stream along with both of these jigs. The full recordings include other music and importantly, some interesting comments by Alex MacIver in interview. The recordings are located at [www.214bb.com](http://www.214bb.com) in the Media section and the Maid is played in Audio files No 8.

The image here is the 214 BB Band in 1964 and includes most of the bandsmen playing in the first recording.



**Standing:** Tom Yeoman, Dougie Elmslie, Finlay Drynan, Gordon Medlow, Davie Scott (leading tip), Donnie Glass, Eddie Thomson (bass), David McGaffin, Alistair Ross, Kenneth Cape, Ronnie Elmslie, Tom Callaghan and Rab Wallace.

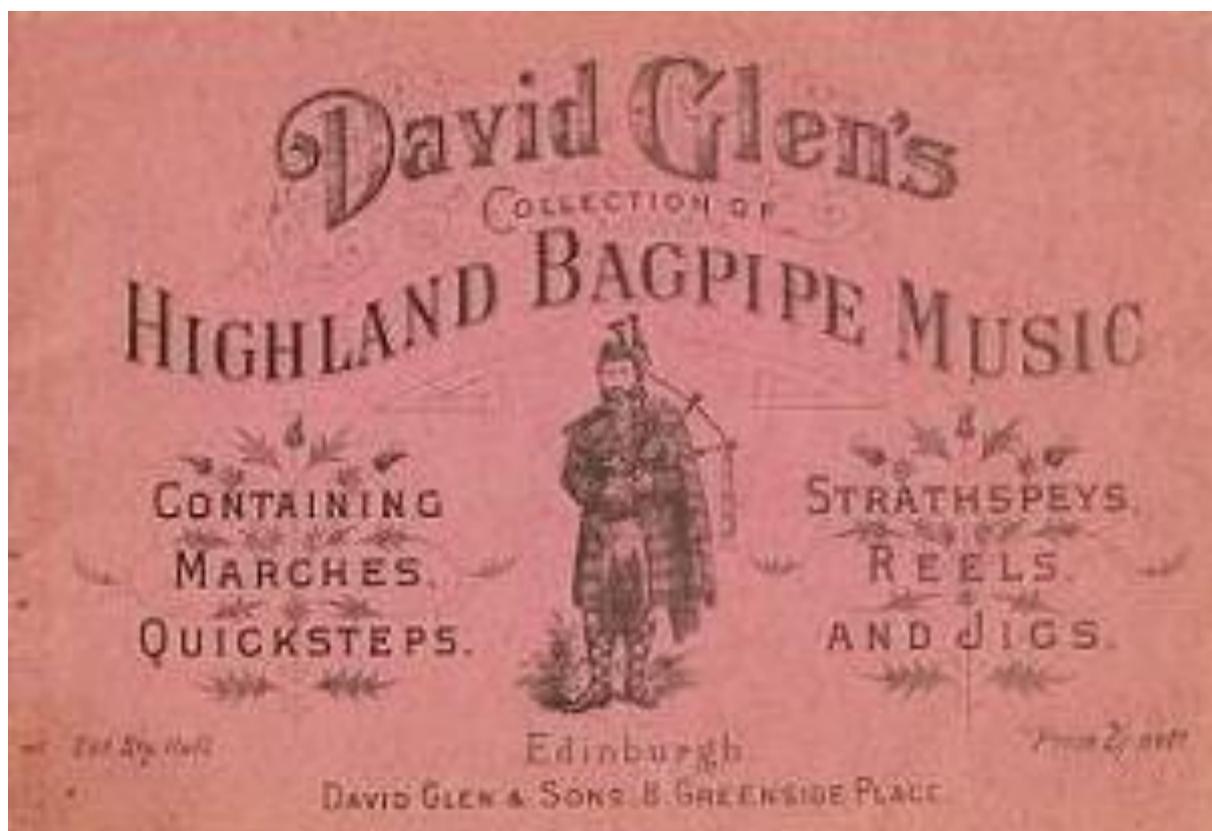
**Sitting:** Matthew Recht, John Buchanan, Archie Maclean, Dan Finlay, P.M. Alex MacIver, Alex Ibell, Allister Osborne, Brian May, Hugh Fulton and Willie Law.

In 1963 and 1964 the band of The 214 BB Whiteinch won all five major Juvenile Championships, The Worlds, Scottish, British, European and Cowal.

**Traditional tunes receive attention from every creative source through which they pass and so they tend to improve with the passage of time as good ideas are kept and inferior ones discarded. This process prevails until nobody thinks reasonable improvement can be made or a change of fashion prompts a re-think. The Maid of Edrachaolis is thought to be a good example of this. It was originally published by Uilleann Ross and was a fairly non descript affair but it had potential. By the time it found its way into David Glen's Collection of Highland Bagpipe Music around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, somebody had given it a good deal of loving attention.**

**William Donaldson in his book The Highland Pipe and Scottish Society talking about the tune comments: "I have always liked the way that it swings into the sub dominant harmony in the second part, a feature it did not always possess until in its final stable form. It has intriguing thematic links with the fiddle tune "The Lads of Dunse", published with that title by the Gows, and which goes back to the 18th century". It was from this backcloth that Alex MacIver rearranged the two original parts of the tune and added parts three and four.**

**Shown below is scan of the facing page of a Glen's book which, if in good condition, would probably attract a good premium were it for sale today.**





*Badcall Bay Edrachailis, from an old engraving*



**The building shown here is The Eddrachilles Hotel.**

**To find Badcall Bay enter IV27 4TH in to your SAT-NAV.**

**On arrival you will be at The Eddrachilles Hotel.**

**Badcall Bay,  
Scourie,  
Sutherland,  
IV27 4<sup>TH</sup>**

**This former manse and later genteel private home, was reconfigured in the later part of the 20th century as a small Highland House hotel. Proprietors, Richard and Fiona Trevor, have owned Eddrachilles since March 2016 and are steadily putting their own stamp on this hotel and restaurant while still retaining its authentic charm.**

**Eddrachillis is a parish in the county of Sutherland, (15 miles NNW from Assynt), including the islands of Handa and Scourie, and the district of Kinlochbervie – the present number of inhabitants is 1699. The original Gaelic name - Eadar Da Chaolas - means “between two kyles”. Eddrachillis is situated roughly halfway between the Kyle of Scow (Kylesku) to the south, and the Kyle of Laxford to the north. A kyle is a strait, a narrow, a sound, or arm of the sea – and is an Anglicised form of the Gaelic word caol. Other examples are Kyle of Lochalsh and Kyleakin.**

**Caolas also means the same (sound/strait/narrow) and has been anglicised to kyles - for example Kyles Scalpay and the Kyles of Bute. Over time, the three words Eadar Da Chaolas have been joined together to make one – Eadarchaolas. Alex has it spelt as Edrachaolis, and it is now known as Eddrachillis. Gaelic place-names become simplified in spelling, making them easier to pronounce for non-Gaelic speakers. So Eadar Da Chaolas has now become Eddrachillis.**

**In our listings of Alex’s tunes, The Maid of Edrachaolis has been translated into Gaelic as MAIGHDEAN EADAR DA CHAOLAS and in some publications there is comment about NIGHAN A BHODICH’N EDRACHAOLUS which translates as THE DAUGHTER of THE OLD MAN OF EDRACHAOLIS**

**Archie Maclean, 214 “Old Boy” now resident in Inverness, found these rough workings for the Maid which Alex scored for parts 3 & 4, among his late father’s possessions. Archie comments that this shows Alex’s original ideas for certain bars (they’re quite interesting in themselves) which you can see have then been scribbled over. As a record of his ongoing alterations (prior to his final idea) it’s of real interest. The date on this signed note is 17<sup>th</sup> November 1967 just three days before he wrote out all four parts as shown.**

Alex. M. MacIver  
17/11/67

THE MAID OF EDRACHAOLIS

JIG.

PARTS 1 AND 2 - TRADITIONAL  
" 3 AND 4 - BY ALEX. M. MACIVER

1<sup>ST</sup> TIME.  
2<sup>ND</sup> TIME.  
1<sup>ST</sup> TIME.  
2<sup>ND</sup> TIME.

20<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 1967

214<sup>TH</sup> GLASGOW COMPANY - THE BOYS' BRIGADE.

# The Maid of Edrachaolis

Jig

Parts 1 and 2, Trad.  
Parts 3 and 4 Alex M MacIver

The image displays a musical score for a jig titled "The Maid of Edrachaolis". The score is written in treble clef with a 6/8 time signature. It consists of ten staves of music. The first two staves represent the traditional parts, while the remaining eight staves are variations by Alex M MacIver. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together, and includes repeat signs with first and second endings. The notation is clear and professional, suitable for a printed music book.

**The Maid is shown here re-type set uniformly as are all of Alex's tunes.**

**The full collection is available and may be sourced at**

[www.214bb.com](http://www.214bb.com)



**The recording of the Maid, Audio No 8, will probably have been played by this generation of the band captured at Cowal in 1968.**

**Front rank L-R Rab Wallace, Hugh MacPhail, Ian Glass and Ronnie Elmslie. Second rank Tom Hamilton. Kenny Hamilton, James Hardie, ??.**  
**Drum Corp was Gordon Gove (Tenor), Jim Cameron (Side), Brian Hutcheson (tenor), Robert McKay (Bass), Willie Ellis (Leading Drummer) and Frank Gilfillan (Side).**

**Although by this time the band were “kiltied” it is good to see the famous Pill Box Hat was still the favoured headgear.**

**In conclusion we have to report, despite many avenues of enquiry, nothing is yet established regarding who this “Maid” was although we remain optimistic that this information will emerge.**

**SURE AND STEDFAST \_\_\_ CINNTAICH'S BUNAITEACH**

**THE END**