

The name of the dance is one of my favourite piobaireachds. King James I imprisoned his political enemies on Bass Rock, a grim volcanic plug in the Firth of Forth. This included Walter Stewart. In 1428, 14 year-old Neil Bhass Mackay was imprisoned on the rock in exchange for his father's freedom. In an attempt to pacify the Highlanders, James imprisoned 40 Chiefs including Angus Dubh Mackay of Strathnaver. Though he was soon released his eldest son Neil, was retained as hostage for the good behaviour of the Clan and since his mother was a daughter of MacDonald of the Isles, for that Clan too. Following the murder of King James at Perth in 1437 Neil escaped from the Bass and was proclaimed 8th Chief of the Clan Mackay. A pobaireachd commemorating this event 'The Unjust Incarceration' was composed by the blind piper of Gairloch, Iain Dall Mackay.