

Duncan Williamson sings a Scotch song, “Loch Maree”

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[This recording was made in August 1986 during at a rented house in Auchtermuchty, Fife. Present on this occasion were Duncan Williamson, John Niles, and a half dozen North Americans in Niles's research team. Williamson directed the song particularly to one team member, Fern Moore, as he wished her to feel included on this occasion.

To introduce “Loch Maree,” Williamson characterizes it as not a traditional song, but rather “a Scotch song,” one that he loves. He states that he learned it from the grandson of “My Wee Maggie”: that is, from a grandson of the Traveller woman of a former generation whose elopement to Tangy Glen, Kintyre, is the subject of “My Wee Maggie,” a story-song in Williamson’s repertory that he had sung to the group somewhat earlier in this same session.

Loch Maree is an inland loch, famed for its beauty, located in Wester Ross, in the Northwest Highlands of Scotland not far from the village of Gairloch.]

- 1 When my heart is full of sadness
And I'm lonely as can be
For my thoughts, they often wander
To the shores of Loch Maree.
- 2 There I met her one fine, fine mornin
Such a beauty that she did dee,
We went walking and went talking
By the shores of Loch Maree. [she did dee: she appeared?]
- 3 How we planned for future meetings!
Oh how happy that we did be
For the dear one I discovered
By the shores of Loch Maree.
- 4 Then one day she went an left me
For to go far across the sea.
Now I'm lonely an broken-hearted
By the shores of Loch Maree.
- 5 Then one day I received a letter.
It had come from across the sea
And a picture showed a weddin
But the bridegroom won't be me.
- 6 So now I'm lonely an broken-hearted

I am sad now as I can be
For the dear one I discovered
By the shores of Loch Maree.

JN: Thank you, Duncan. [*Now starting to wind up this long session.*] I think that's enough for one afternoon.

DW: It's just a Scotch song. It really happened, ye know? It tells the story of a young man meetin a beautiful young American lady, and she left him to go back tae the States, and she sent him a picture of her weddin and he was very sad. He was a shepherd. It's a true story! He was a shepherd at Loch Maree. It's a true story!

FM: What is the title of the song?

DW: "Loch Maree," darlin, is the song. "Loch Maree."

HT: M-A-R-E-E.

FM: Oh.

DW: Yeah, "Loch Maree."

DW = Duncan Williamson

JN = John Niles

FM = Fern Moore

HT = Holly Tannen