

# Clan MacPherson and the Jacobite Rising of 1745

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## Introduction

I am not going to add to the immense literature describing the Highlanders' march down into England in 1745<sup>1</sup> and the disaster at Culloden the next year, or the debate on what might have happened had they not turned back at Derby. Instead I am attempting to place the Jacobite revolt into its context of British politics and foreign affairs.

## Background

The word "Jacobitism" is derived from the name "James" (in Hebrew, "Jacob", Latin "Jacobus", French "Jacques"). It refers back to the "Glorious Revolution" of 1688 when James II, the last Catholic King of England, ran away before the forces of William of Orange, his nephew and son-in-law, and took refuge in France along with his baby son James Edward Stuart. William occupied London without a shot being fired, and summoned a Parliament which proclaimed him King. This coup was bloodless in England, though serious fighting followed in both Scotland and Ireland, and war was declared on France in 1689.

The Protestant Succession in Britain was perpetuated by the 1701 Act of Settlement, which passed over the claims of James Edward Stuart and awarded the inheritance of the crown to the Hanoverian line. This was achieved in 1714 when George of Hanover succeeded without any resistance as King George I. Jacobites were therefore people who believed that all this was wrong, and that James Edward Stuart was the true King.

Various groups might have an incentive to become Jacobites. Any nation hostile to Britain would find it easy to stir up trouble by giving the exiles who clustered round James some funding, or the promise of military support. The nation most likely to do this, of course, was France. But the long series of wars between Britain and France ended in 1713 with the Treaty of Utrecht, which specified that James Edward Stuart (known to Hanoverians as "The Pretender") must be expelled from France. Catholics, of course, would have preferred a restoration of the Catholic Stuarts, but there were few Catholics in England, and they took no part in politics.

So might the Tory party, which was kept out of power for a whole generation after 1714,

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<sup>1</sup> A note on dates. Until the reform of the British calendar in 1752, dates in Britain were 11 days behind those on the continent. Thus, for instance, the skirmish at Clifton took place on December 18<sup>th</sup> or 29<sup>th</sup>, depending on which system is used. The dates used here are in the British reckoning, called by historians "O.S.": Old Style. The other problem is that until 1752 the British year changed not on January 1<sup>st</sup> but on March 25<sup>th</sup>, the Feast of the Annunciation. Historians always follow the continental usage in this case.

but Tories were also strong supporters of the Church of England, and would have qualms about supporting a Catholic claimant. Then there were the “Non-jurors”: Anglicans who had followed Archbishop Sancroft in refusing to recognise William III as Head of the Church of England. The Non-juring church continued in existence throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and its members were of necessity Jacobites. After the fall of Walpole’s ministry in 1742, many Tories hoped for serious constitutional changes. But within a year or so it became clear that no such changes were in prospect, so they might have begun to consider the revolutionary alternative.

All sensible Jacobites knew that any rebellion was unlikely to succeed without foreign help, probably from France, but this would have meant allying themselves with the national enemy, and in any case the decades after the Utrecht treaty generally saw amity between Britain and France.

The situation in Scotland was rather different. The revolution of 1688 had led to the Presbyterian church becoming the official church of Scotland, which was much resented by Catholics and Episcopalians, of whom there were large numbers amongst the highland clans. The Campbells of Argyll, previously regarded as dangerous rebels (two successive Earls of Argyll having been executed as traitors) now became the government’s main support in Scotland. The Act of Union with England in 1707 was widely resented. In 1708 a French expedition, with James Edward Stuart on board, approached the east coast of Scotland, but did not manage to effect a landing.

Until the 17<sup>th</sup> century the peoples living north of the “Highland Line”, which ran roughly from Dumbarton to Inverness, had played little part in Scottish history. People in the Lowlands regarded them as barbarians and cattle-thieves, and would have been astonished to learn that modern Scotland has made totems of such items as the tartan, the kilt and the bagpipes, which in early modern times would have been associated purely with those robbers from the north (insofar as they were not simply inventions of sentimental Victorian antiquarians, which in great part they were).

North of the Highland Line was a region largely outside the writ of central government. It was a lawless land, torn by feuds and private wars. Under these circumstances, people banded together in clans for self-protection. The economy was primitive, based on raising cattle, and the great bulk of the people were extremely poor peasants. In such a society, what determined a chieftain’s importance was not gold or land in themselves, but how many men would turn out to fight for him in a crisis.

The government in Edinburgh would try to control the situation by allying with some clans against the others; and after 1688 it was the Campbells of Argyll who fulfilled this role. Many clan chiefs retained the ancient “right of pit and gallows”: the right to imprison or even execute criminals on their territory without any reference to the king’s judges (This was known as “Heritable Jurisdictions”).

We cannot imagine such a society surviving into Victorian times, and already by the 18<sup>th</sup> century things were changing. The lure of civilisation was proving hard to resist, as it

always does. Already many of the clan chieftains were spending part of the year in Edinburgh, London or even Paris, where they would live like 18<sup>th</sup> century gentlemen, and then in the hunting season they would return to their glens and once again become barbarian tribal chiefs. It is obvious which tendency would win in the end. But to live the life of a civilised gentleman required money, and for this their clan lands would have to be farmed differently, to produce a financial profit, not large numbers of fighting men. After the failure of Jacobitism this is what happened, as the common clansmen were evicted from their holdings to make way for sheep. It has long been debated how far the Jacobite revolts should be viewed as “the last kick of a dying society”: certainly the traditional clan society did die soon afterwards.

Scottish Jacobitism therefore always had a mish-mash of different motivations: nationalism, resentment from Catholics and Episcopalians, and hatred of the Campbells from their traditional clan enemies, such as the various MacDonalld septes.

Although the Jacobites were unable to do anything to prevent the accession of George I, the next year, 1715, saw serious risings in both Scotland and the north of England. The latter was ignominiously defeated at Preston, and the Scottish rising, which attracted widespread support amongst the highland clans, was brought to a standstill at the battle of Sherrifmuir outside Stirling by John Campbell, Duke of Argyll, and then rather feebly retreated northwards. James Edward Stuart did not arrive in Scotland until after this, proved to be an uninspiring leader, and returned to France having achieved nothing.

There was another attempt in 1719 when, in consequence of an undeclared war between Britain and Spain, a body of Spanish troops landed in western Scotland and attracted some local support from the clans of the region, but were soon defeated by British regulars. The last kick of this phase of Jacobitism was a purely English affair; the so-called “Atterbury Plot” of 1722, when the prominent Tory Bishop Atterbury was accused of plotting and forced to flee the country.

Over the next two decades there were occasional outbreaks of discontent. The imposition of the Malt Tax led to serious riots in Glasgow in 1725, when General Wade led a strong military force into Glasgow to crush any trouble. Then there were the Porteous riots in Edinburgh in 1737. There had been tumultuous disturbances after the hanging of a smuggler; Captain Porteous, commander of the Edinburgh garrison, had ordered his troops to open fire, and people had been killed. But the order to fire had apparently been given without proper authorisation from the magistrates, Porteous was arrested and condemned to death. (This episode illustrates the widespread hatred with which the army was viewed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century: see also the “Boston Massacre” of 1770)

But Porteous’s execution was postponed by royal authority. Suspecting, probably quite rightly, that he would be acquitted, an infuriated mob stormed the Tollbooth, took out the unfortunate captain, and lynched him. (This incident forms a dramatic scene in Walter Scott’s novel: “The Heart of Midlothian”) The Prime Minister, Sir Robert Walpole, responded with a collective punishment of the city of Edinburgh; as a result of which the Duke of Argyll flung his considerable political influence against Walpole at the next

election.

The Highlands were left largely untouched after the failures of the “15” and the “19”. The clans were ordered to disarm, but no serious attempt was made to enforce it, and the Jacobite clans simply hid their weapons and waited. Scotland remained effectively under the rule of the Duke of Argyll and his Campbells, but the great Duke himself died in 1743 and his successors were men of a lower calibre. A “leadership gap” developed.

After the Malt Tax riots of 1725 it was decided to raise six “Independent Companies” of Highlanders. These were later increased in numbers and paid as regular troops, forming the famous “Black Watch” in 1739 (the 43<sup>rd</sup> Regiment of the line, later the 42<sup>nd</sup>: “the gallant forty-twa”). In 1742 a rumour that the regiment was to be sent to the West Indies (notoriously a “death station” where yellow fever was rampant and from which few soldiers returned alive), led to a serious mutiny, which was crushed with many executions.

### **Preparations for the ‘45**

By the 1730s James Edward Stuart was no longer politically active, but his eldest son, Charles, born in 1720 and to be known to posterity as “Bonnie Prince Charlie” or the “Young Pretender”, was eager for some action. The opportunity arose in the early 1740s.

For years there had been no wars, and only a few serious international crises, in western Europe. Sir Robert Walpole and his French counterpart, Cardinal Fleury, were both anxious to avoid conflict, and for this reason the Jacobites received little encouragement.

But Fleury was now in his late eighties, and a younger generation of French leaders were itching for a more assertive policy. In 1739 Walpole was hustled, much against his best judgement, into war with Spain (the memorably-named “War of Jenkins’ Ear”), and Jacobite hopes began to revive.

Then in 1740 the death of the Emperor Charles VI led to the outbreak of the War of the Austrian Succession, which was to continue on and off until 1748. Walpole was defeated in Parliament in early 1742, resigned, and was replaced by a new government committed to an anti-French policy. Although there was no formal declaration of war yet, British money financed a largely mercenary army which King George II led personally to western Germany and defeated the French at Dettingen in June 1743.

There was now every incentive for Franco-Jacobite cooperation. Agents and spies became active, and an “Association” was formed in Scotland, involving, amongst others, Cameron of Lochiel, Simon Fraser (Lord Lovat) and the titular Duke of Perth, promising a rising if the French could provide military support. English Jacobite leaders were also in contact with Versailles, and French spies compiled lists of Jacobite nobles and landowners in each county (none of whom actually joined Charles when it came to the crunch!).

Then in January 1743 Fleury died, but he was not replaced as Prime Minister: instead King Louis XV announced that he would lead the government himself. He proved to be most unsatisfactory in the job, being timid and indecisive and preferring to consult with individual ministers without informing the others. For the next few vital years there was to be no coherence at all in French policy-making and direction.

In late 1743 the French drew up an invasion plan, under which 10,000 French troops, supported by the battle-fleet from Brest, were to sail from Calais and Dunkirk, land on the south coast, and advance to London. It was expected that this force would be supported by a major Jacobite rising. James and Charles, in Rome, knew about French intentions, but were not consulted about the plans. They issued a rather vague and general manifesto, promising such things as a “free Parliament”, and end to corruption, and full religious toleration; though the fact that they were both Catholics would be likely to be a major stumbling-point for uncommitted people in Britain.

The French government did not want them to enter France, since their movements were always closely monitored by British spies. But in January 1744 Charles lost patience, left Rome in disguise, and reached Paris on February 8<sup>th</sup>. Up to this point the British government knew nothing of French plans. It may well have been the arrival of Charles in France that alerted the spies that something was afoot, and on the 14<sup>th</sup> a spy, Francois de Bussy, was able to inform the British government of the plans.

An emergency was announced in Parliament and the English Jacobite leaders were intimidated into silence, though not arrested. Admiral Norris was sent to patrol the Channel, awaiting the French fleet from Brest. Battle lines were forming off Dungeness when a violent storm swept down the Channel. Two days later, as it lifted, Norris’s fleet was still more or less intact, but the Brest fleet had been swept away, and the French transports in Dunkirk had been badly damaged. The French commander, Marshal Saxe, who had never been enthusiastic about the invasion plan, called it off, considering that his forces were better employed in the Austrian Netherlands (now Belgium).

On March 30<sup>th</sup> war was formally declared between Britain and France. The person left most bitterly disappointed by the fiasco was Charles, who was still resolved to make some attempt on Britain. Jacobite agents, such as Murray of Broughton, continued to lobby for the cause in Paris, and to give Charles optimistic reports on the situation in Scotland. But how could anything be done without French help?

### **The Rising of ‘45**

The principal theatre of the war for both Britain and France was the Netherlands, where on May 10<sup>th</sup> 1745, British forces commanded by the Duke of Cumberland were defeated by the French at Fontenoy. Cumberland’s army included the Black Watch regiment, led by John Campbell, Earl of Loudon. It was thus out of the country at the time of the rebellion, which greatly weakened Hanoverian strength in Scotland.

The Secretary of State for Scotland, Lord Tweeddale, proved a disastrous appointment,

and the politicians in Edinburgh spent their time bickering. The only government official in Scotland to show much initiative and energy in the crisis was Duncan Forbes of Culloden, the Lord President of the court of Sessions. Military affairs were in the hands of Lieutenant-General Joshua Grant, in his eighties and senile, with hardly any troops.

The Highlands were largely left to police themselves, by arrangements between the clan chiefs. In October 1744 Keppoch, Glengarry and Lochiel formally agreed to work together to stop cattle-raiding. Other chiefs joined in, notably Ewan MacPherson the Younger of Cluny, who was to watch over the Grampians.

In midsummer 1745 came the crucial decision, as Charles set sail from Nantes with two privately-owned French ships. One of these was intercepted by a British warship, but the other, the “Doutelle,” made landfall at Eriskay in the Western Isles of Scotland on July 23<sup>rd</sup>. Just seven men came ashore, and the ship immediately turned for home. There are many unanswered questions here. How far was this expedition encouraged or sponsored by ministers in the French government? What promises had Charles received of French military aid? And how much did he know about Jacobite prospects in Britain?

Charles’s early meetings with the clan chiefs were not encouraging. They had some foreknowledge of his coming, but considered that a rising would be futile without French intervention. However, Charles’s personal charisma persuaded the MacDonalds of Keppoch and Glengarry and, most importantly, the Camerons of Lochiel to join him. Donald Cameron the younger of Lochiel (his father, the clan chief, being in exile abroad) advised Charles to return to France.

What followed has been recorded:-

“In a few days,” said Charles, “with the few friends I have, I will erect the royal standard, and proclaim to the people of Britain that Charles Stuart is come over to claim the crown of his ancestors, to win it or to perish in the attempt: Lochiel, who my father told me was our firmest friend, may stay at home and learn from the newspapers the fate of his prince.”

“No,” said Lochiel, “I’ll share the fate of my prince, and so shall every man over whom nature or fortune hath given me any power.”

On Monday August 19<sup>th</sup>, Charles raised his standard at Glenfinnan, at the head of Loch Shiel. For hours he waited with his 300 men of Clanranald, perhaps wondering whether anyone would rally to his cause, but then in mid-afternoon the skirl of the pipes was heard, and 700 Camerons and 300 MacDonalds of Keppoch marched in. The rebellion was now definitely “on.” Lochiel did not inform Charles that raising his clan had proved difficult, and he had been obliged to threaten to set fire to their huts before they would agree to follow.

The government in London learned of Charles’s landing on August 8<sup>th</sup>. King George II was then in Hanover (where he spent more than half his reign, as Jacobite propagandists were always keen to point out), leaving the country under the control of a Regency Council. If government forces had stood at Stirling or Perth, as the Duke of Argyll had

done in 1715, the rebellion would have been confined to the Highlands; but instead General Sir John Cope was ordered to nip the trouble in the bud; a strategy which had worked well in 1719. He set off northwards with 2,000 troops of poor quality, but on August 26<sup>th</sup> on the route to Fort Augustus he found Charles's men holding the precipitous Pass of Corrieyairack; and, fearing he might be ambushed and surrounded if he risked a battle on such unfavourable ground, he retreated north-eastwards towards Inverness.

Many of the Highlanders wished to pursue Cope, but Charles opted to advance on the now undefended road south, through Killiekrankie and down to the Lowlands, arriving at Perth on September 4<sup>th</sup>. More supporters now flocked to the Jacobite colours: the outlaw MacGregors, Robertson of Struan, the titular Duke of Perth and others; but by far the most important recruit was Lord George Murray.

Murray had been "out" in 1719, but he was now 51 years old and he hesitated long before committing himself to this latest rebellion. He was to prove easily the best general on the Jacobite side, but he was a proud, prickly man, who aroused Charles's anger more and more as the adventure progressed, with fatal consequences.

Ewan MacPherson of Cluny was approximately 35 years old. Although his clan had been Jacobite, his own position, like that of many of the clan chiefs, was distinctly ambiguous; waiting to see which way the wind was blowing before committing themselves. He was the cousin of Lochiel, but on the other hand he held a commission in the regiment of the impeccably Whiggish Lord Loudon, and his first move was apparently to raise his clan for King George. His defection to the rebel side had not been anticipated by the government. It may well have been Cluny who warned Cope of the dangers of Corrieyairack.

On August 27<sup>th</sup> Murray of Broughton summoned Cluny to join the rising, but received no reply. Next day, however, Cluny was intercepted by a party of Camerons; "a willing prisoner," it was said; and agreed to change sides. "An angel could not resist the soothing close applications of the rebels" was how he explained it - though it seems likely that he was also promised compensation in France should the rising fail.

As it was, Cluny was one of only three clan chiefs to commit himself unreservedly to Charles's cause (the other two being Keppoch and MacKinnon). He then departed to raise Clan MacPherson for the Prince, though his men did not actually join the rebel army until the end of October; one of the last clan regiments to appear.

In mid-September extra companies were recruited for the government from the Hanoverian clans: the Mackays, Munros, Sutherlands and MacDonalds of Sleat. Other clans were hesitant, or divided in their loyalties: Ludovick Grant urged his clansmen to stay at home, but many joined Charles. In any case, government actions were far too late.

Charles's little force continued southwards unopposed, through Perth and Stirling, where they were unable to take the castle, but instead simply passed it by. Amongst those who joined Charles at this stage was a 26-year old Edinburgh man who gave himself the

improbable title of the Chevalier de Johnstone. He became aide-de-camp to Lord George Murray and survived all the subsequent adventures to give us the most readable first-hand account of the campaign.

On September 17<sup>th</sup> Edinburgh was taken, when the Highlanders made a surprise rush on the city gates before they could be closed. There was no resistance from the citizens, but the garrison of 600 men in the castle, perched high on its rock, refused to surrender, and their heavy cannon constantly threatened the city below, so the Jacobite hold on Scotland's capital was always precarious.

Meanwhile, General Cope had embarked his troops at Inverness, sailed down the east coast of Scotland and landed at Dunbar, to the east of Edinburgh; on hearing which, the Jacobites marched out to meet him. On September 20<sup>th</sup> the two armies came into contact at Preston Pans. Cope took up what he believed was a strong defensive position, with his two flanks guarded by the sea and an area of marshland; but overnight a local man named Anderson led the Jacobites on a path through the marsh.

Cope's men awoke to find themselves outflanked, the Highlanders charged, and the government forces were swiftly routed. An observer of the battle celebrated by composing a song still performed today: "Hey, Johnny Cope, are you wa'king yet?" This victory left Charles the master of almost all of Scotland: only the Campbell lands and a few isolated fortresses still held out for the government. More recruits came to join the cause: the MacDonalds of Keppoch, Lord Lewis Gordon and various other noblemen, and Cluny with 400 MacPhersons.

Because the British navy dominated the seas, direct communication between Charles and the French government was extremely difficult, and supplying significant military aid would present formidable logistical problems. Also, the Jacobite rising formed only a small aspect of the overall war, and the French government was deeply divided on what should have priority.

In August, while Charles was mustering his forces, Marshal Saxe's army in the Netherlands captured Ostend for the French, but this was balanced by events across the Atlantic, where a British amphibious expedition took Louisbourg, the great fortress off Nova Scotia which guarded the entrance to the St. Laurence estuary and to French Canada. The lack of decisive leadership from King Louis XV meant that every minister tended to follow his own pet project.

The French government learnt of Charles's landing within a few days, and some ministers urged the immediate creation of an invasion force, but instead Louis, in a timid compromise, sent the Marquis D'Eguilles to liase with Charles. He did not meet Charles until mid-October. Following this, the Treaty of Fontainebleau was drawn up between the French government and Jacobite agents in Paris, and Voltaire was recruited to draw up a manifesto. The French began to assemble invasion forces at Dunkirk and Boulogne. But already it was all too late. No serious invasion could be mounted before Christmas at the earliest, and by then the whole situation had changed.

Charles also delayed before making his next move; a delay which in retrospect could well have been fatal. He was advised by Murray and other chiefs to appeal to Scots nationalist sentiment, to denounce the 1707 Act of Union, call a Scottish Parliament and await French assistance, but his goal at all times was England. He received optimistic reports of French plans from D'Eguilles, but had no information of what, if anything, Jacobites in England were proposing to do. As it was, his little army did not set out from Edinburgh until the end of October.

The immediate threat came from a government force of 11,000 men under General Hawley at Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Charles wanted to attack him, but instead Murray immobilised Hawley with a feint before heading off westwards, and reached Carlisle on November 9<sup>th</sup>. The city's antiquated castle was virtually undefended, bad weather prevented Hawley from marching to its assistance, and on November 18<sup>th</sup> Carlisle surrendered; the first town in England to fall to the Jacobites.

The march southwards followed the line of the present railway and M6 motorway, through Penrith, Kendal, Lancaster, Preston and Wigan. They attracted little support, but neither did they meet with any organised resistance. Instead of making for the Mersey crossing at Warrington, the little army then turned eastwards. On November 30<sup>th</sup> Manchester fell to the Jacobites. Manchester was not yet the vast cotton-manufacturing city it would become in the next century, but it had a strong Non-Juring element.

They reached Macclesfield on December 1<sup>st</sup>. The intention was probably to continue south through Birmingham and Oxford, where there was likely to be strong Jacobite support, but by this time a government army was in position in Staffordshire. It was commanded by the Duke of Cumberland, King George's second and favourite son, the same age as Charles, and Lord Ligonier, an exiled French Huguenot.

So instead the small Jacobite cavalry contingent was sent through Congleton towards the Potteries, to immobilize Cumberland by confusing him about their intentions, while the bulk of the infantry headed eastwards across the moorlands, through Leek and reaching Derby on December 4<sup>th</sup>. There they halted, and two days later the famous and much-disputed decision was taken to turn around and retreat to Scotland, which surrendered the initiative to the British government.

They had now effectively sidestepped Cumberland, and in a race for London, they would win. But what was awaiting them further south? None of them knew. And if they were stopped, Cumberland and Wade (who was slowly moving southwards through the East Midlands) would now prevent any retreat to Scotland, and not a man of them would escape. Where were the French? the clan leaders wanted to know. Charles could not tell them. Nor could Charles produce even one single letter from a prominent Englishman firmly promising to join the rebellion? He could not.

It is not known precisely how many men had joined Charles in England (government

propaganda was obviously keen to minimise the numbers, and imply they were mostly desperate cases from the slums of Manchester), but what is certain is that no Englishman of prominence had joined: not one single Lord, Member of Parliament or major landowner.

Lord George Murray had always been doubtful about the wisdom of invading England. Now, in the absence of any hard evidence of support, and fearing that, even if they reached London intact, their little army of 5,000 infantry and a mere 500 cavalry would simply be swallowed up in a city of half a million souls, the clan chiefs were unanimous for turning back. Charles, with extreme reluctance, was obliged to accept the decision. It has been endlessly debated since whether a world-shattering opportunity was lost, and whether Charles's instinct was wiser than Murray's strategic common sense.

As it was, Charles sulked for most of the retreat, trusted Murray less and less, and increasingly relied on the advice of his Irish friends, Sheridan and O'Sullivan, who were wholly without either military experience or strategic sense.

King George II had returned to London on September 11<sup>th</sup>, but politics was complicated by the fact that it was widely known that he had little faith in his ministers: the Prime Minister Henry Pelham and his brother the Duke of Newcastle, the Secretary of State. Opinion in England tended grossly to overestimate the size of the rebel forces, and the government had no clear notion of what the rebels intended: what support they might attract, and, most worryingly, what part the French might play.

The turn back at Derby was crucial, because it at least showed that there was no coordinated plan between Charles and the French. The French invasion force at Dunkirk was not ready to set sail until the New Year, and was being closely watched by the British fleet under Admiral Vernon; and then there came the news of the retreat from Derby. In mid-January the Duc de Richelieu, who was supposed to command the invasion, cancelled the order to proceed.

The whole affair illustrates the general confusion and irresolution permeating French decision-making throughout the conflict. But for Marshal Saxe, who had never been enthusiastic for an invasion, it worked out well, for he took over Richelieu's troops, led them into what is now Belgium, and captured Brussels.

The Jacobite retreat followed the same route as their advance, with Cumberland in pursuit. Once again, the local population took no action, though the attitude was obviously more unsympathetic than during the advance. There was only one skirmish, which is traditionally said to be "the last battle on English soil".

By December 16<sup>th</sup> the Jacobite forces were at Shap, a village on the main route over the mountains, with Cumberland's army at Lancaster, a day's march to the south. Charles led the main part of his force north to Penrith, but the rearguard, including Cluny, Glengarry and Lord George Murray, was some distance behind, struggling over Shap Fell with the baggage and cannons through heavy rain, and they halted for the night of the 17<sup>th</sup> at

Clifton, a few miles outside Penrith. There they discovered that they were closely pursued by some of Cumberland's horse. Charles refused to send back any substantial aid, though the rearguard was reinforced by the MacPhersons and Appin Stewarts running back to help. Murray now had about 1,000 men, and drew them up in a series of enclosures by the road. Captain John MacPherson of Strathmashie described the action that followed.

The Highlanders fired a single volley then charged 150 yards in the dark to attack Bland's dragoons, who quickly retreated. Fourteen claymores were broken on the dragoons' helmets, but swords abandoned on the field were more than sufficient to make up the loss. The action lasted about half an hour.

Cumberland decided to wait for reinforcements, allowing the Jacobites to retreat further to Carlisle. Charles left a garrison of 350, mostly volunteers from England, in the castle there as he withdrew into Scotland on the 20<sup>th</sup>. This decision achieved little apart from the sacrifice of his supporters. Cumberland brought up big guns from Workington and bombarded the castle, which surrendered on the 30<sup>th</sup>. Next autumn, 31 rebels taken there were hanged in Carlisle, Penrith and Brampton.

Cumberland did not pursue them further, being recalled to the south coast to guard against any French invasion. But during the march into England, government forces in Edinburgh castle had regained control of the city, so instead the Jacobite army headed for Glasgow, arriving there at Christmas. They had to requisition food and clothing, but the city was preserved from pillage.

The rebellion was by no means over. Various other clans rallied to Charles after the retreat, including various Gordons, Farquarsons and MacKenzies. Simon Fraser, Lord Lovat, after a long life of double-dealing and treachery, at last committed himself to the Jacobite cause: a decision which was to cost him his head. MacKintosh commanded a company of Loudon's Black Watch, but in his absence his wife, aged 24, raised Clan Chattan for Charles; an exploit earning her the nickname of "Colonel Anne". Many clansmen were reluctant to turn out to fight, and Charles authorised Cluny to burn the homes of any of his clansmen who deserted the cause.

The New Year saw some manoeuvring for position as the Jacobites attempted to attack Stirling castle, and General Hawley advanced from Edinburgh to intercept them. On January 17<sup>th</sup> the two sides met at Falkirk. Neither side was well positioned, but the Jacobite right, led by the MacDonalds, advanced to seize the high ground and then charged. Hawley's reaction was incompetent, his army was caught by surprise in a blizzard, and his guns and cavalry never came into action.

Owing to general confusion, the Jacobite left failed to follow up this success: losses on the government side amounted to some 400, as against no more than 50 Jacobite dead; but the bulk of Hawley's army was able to retreat rather than being routed, and the Jacobites were unable to take any strategic advantage from the victory. Cluny's cousin, William MacPherson, known as "the Purser", was killed in the action.

The clan leaders, led by Murray, Keppoch and Cluny, insisted on a retreat into the mountains. Charles was opposed, but sulkily acquiesced. The unsuccessful siege of Stirling castle resumed, and there followed more disputes about strategy on February 2<sup>nd</sup>, which led to Cluny, by now a strong supporter of Murray, furiously storming out of a meeting.

In mid-February they retreated further to Inverness, but Murray was confident that a war in the Highlands could be continued for several years. A company of French troops arrived: actually Irish Catholic mercenaries in the French service, commanded by Brigadier Walter Stapleton; and with their help Fort Augustus was captured. Other ships from France were intercepted by the British navy. On March 15th, in one of the last successful Jacobite actions, Murray led his Athollmen south from Inverness, linked up with Cluny at Ruthven, and raided several government posts, though they lacked the heavy equipment to take Blair castle. Cluny then separated from the main force, to guard the Badenoch passes.

A great deal has been written about the disaster of Culloden on April 16<sup>th</sup>. From the Jacobite point of view, everything went wrong. Charles, against all the best advice, insisted in fighting a textbook-style battle, which inevitably exposed his weaknesses in cavalry and cannon. His food supply had broken down; some of the army, including the MacPhersons, were absent, and the rest, heavily outnumbered, were exhausted after an abortive night attack on Cumberland's camp.

The field had not been properly assessed, the troop dispositions were wrong, and few of the Highlanders even managed to reach the government lines, most being destroyed by cannon-fire. Keppoch and MacGillivray were killed, and Lochiel, whose legs had been broken by grapeshot, was carried from the battlefield to take refuge in MacPherson territory at Badenoch. As his army disintegrated, Charles left the battlefield to the bitter cry of Lord Elcho: "Fly then, you cowardly Italian!" It tells us something about the military conventions prevailing at the time that the Irish mercenaries who surrendered were afforded what would now be called "prisoner of war status", whereas many wounded Highlanders were simply slaughtered in the aftermath of the battle.

This was the end of the rising. After Culloden, 4,000 men, including the still-intact MacPhersons, rallied to Murray at Ruthven; but food was short and the force would have been very difficult to hold together. Albermarle, who succeeded Cumberland as commander-in-chief in Scotland, reported that, if help came from France, many clans were eager to rise again; citing the MacPhersons, Camerons, MacLeans, MacDonalds of Glengarry and Grants of Glenmoriston. But Charles had given up all thought of continuing the fight. However, it was not the end of the story, and much of Charles's legend depends upon what followed.

### **Aftermath**

For the next five months, Charles was a fugitive in the highlands and islands. There was a

price of £30,000 on his head, but no-one betrayed him. His famous encounter with Flora MacDonald came in June 1746 when she helped take him by boat from Uist to Skye, with Charles improbably disguised as her servant. He only knew her for a brief period, and there was no suspicion of any romance between them. (Flora was arrested, and went to live in America; but when the War of Independence broke out she was forced to return to Scotland. Like many exiled Jacobites, she supported the British government in this conflict).

On September 1<sup>st</sup> Charles, together with Lochiel, joined Cluny in MacPherson territory south-east of Fort William. Cluny attempted to kneel and kiss his prince's hand, but Charles raised him up and treated him as an equal. He said,

"I am sorry, Cluny, that you and your regiment were not at Culloden. I did not hear till very late that you were so near to have come up with us that day," though really Charles had no-one to blame but himself for the catastrophe.

The party took refuge high up Ben Alder. The hideaway, which also harboured Lochgarry and Dr. Cameron, came to be nicknamed "Cluny's cage"; though it was in reality a kind of hut, described as "a romantic comical habitation", built into a hillside in a wooded area, constructed in such a way that any smoke would not be visible to searching parties. They remained there until news came through that French ships had run the British blockade and anchored in Loch nan Uahm.

Charles's party (described as "25 gentlemen and 107 men of common rank") made their way to the coast and embarked for France on "L'Hereux", but Cluny remained in hiding in his "cage", with a price of a thousand pounds on his head, for eight more years. At one point during this time his wife had to hide in a corn kiln, where she gave birth to his son, Duncan; who was to be known ever after as "Duncan of the kiln". ("Prince Charlie's Cave" can be located on some modern maps, up above the south-eastern end of Loch Ericht; still remote from any road.)

The lifting of an immediate threat of invasion had led to extraordinary political events in London. The Prime Minister, Henry Pelham, had long been frustrated by King George II's obvious lack of confidence in his government, and on February 10<sup>th</sup> 1746 the entire government resigned in protest. The King attempted to create a new ministry, headed by his favourites, Lords Granville and Bath, but few politicians of any credibility and stature were willing to join them, and after just two days the attempt was abandoned. (Horace Walpole wrote of this extraordinary episode that, "Men dared not walk the streets of London at night, for fear of being press-ganged as a cabinet minister") The King was obliged to once again appoint Pelham, who negotiated a peace treaty with France at Aachen in 1748 and then proceeded to run the country unchallenged until his sudden death in 1754. A great many people have heard of Bonnie Prince Charlie, but how many could tell who was Prime Minister at the time of his rebellion?

Cumberland ordered the rebel clans to surrender their weapons, but in the event only the MacPhersons did. Rebel areas were subjected to the notorious "harrying of the glens." Companies of soldiers combed through the lands of the rebel chieftains; looting, burning

homes and arresting or killing those with arms. Cluny's house was burnt by government forces that June. At a more official level of justice, 120 Jacobites were executed, including four Scottish noblemen, and about 600 died in captivity, with 1000 transported to the American colonies. Rebel chiefs who eluded capture were condemned by Acts of Attainder and their estates confiscated. In the aftermath of the revolt, a determined effort was made to abolish the traditional clan society. The Disarming Act was fully enforced. Heritable jurisdictions were abolished, for which loyalist clan chiefs received compensation, but rebel chiefs got nothing. The wearing of Highland dress was made illegal even in private, punishable by imprisonment or transportation. The ancient society of the highlands was thus abolished.

Charles was well-received in Paris, but found there was no support for committing troops to a new expedition, and under the terms of the Treaty of Aachen he was expelled from France. For several years he continued to live in hope. In 1750 he came secretly to London, met the Duke of Beaufort and other Jacobites, and even converted to the Church of England in an attempt to win support.

The last real Jacobite attempt was the Elibank Plot of 1749-53. International tension had led the Jacobites to hope for military aid from Europe: from France, Spain, or even Frederick the Great's Prussia, where the Keith brothers held high military office. Doctor Cameron, Lochiel's brother, was sent to contact Cluny, who was still in hiding, and large supplies of arms were promised. But nothing happened. The conspirators had been penetrated by a certain "Pickle the spy", and Dr. Cameron was arrested in March 1753. He gave nothing away, and was executed under the attainder passed against him after the '45, without the need for any fresh trial. Frederick of Prussia now decided to throw in his lot with Britain, and Jacobite hopes came to nothing.

In July 1754 Charles moved to Basle. He now summoned Cluny to meet him, who accordingly left Scotland after eight years in hiding, never to return. But the meeting was not a happy one, for Charles suspected Cluny of theft. What had happened was that 35,000 gold louis d'ors had been successfully run into the west of Scotland, intended to pay for troops. Some was embezzled, but most was distributed under the supervision of Cluny to relieve the sufferings of Jacobite families who had lost everything. It was nicknamed the "Locharkaig Treasure."

Charles in exile became obsessed with the suspicion that Cluny had stolen it, and he also wanted to know what had become of various items of Stuart family jewels and plate which had been lost after Culloden. Cluny denied any knowledge of this, and in his turn he was shocked at Charles's physical and moral deterioration. He urged him to stop drinking, and to part from his mistress, Clementina Walkinshaw, whom none of the Jacobite leaders liked, and get himself respectably married.

Charles was furious, and never forgave Cluny. The Jacobite cause was now so obviously dead that in the Seven Years' War (1756-63) French plans to invade England took no account whatsoever of a possible Jacobite rising. Cluny died in 1756, denying till the end any knowledge of the missing treasure and royal jewels.

As the threat receded, there was a gradual relaxation in Scotland. In 1752 an Act of Grace pardoned most rebels (though it specifically excluded “each and every person by the name of MacGregor”: the outlaw clan was not pardoned till 1775). In 1757 Highland regiments were recruited for the Seven Years’ War, and it was a regiment of Frasers, a notoriously Jacobite clan, who led the storming of Quebec. The wearing of Highland dress ceased to be illegal. The 1746 Disarming Act was repealed in 1782, and in 1784 the owners of many confiscated Jacobite estates were permitted to buy them back, including Cluny’s.

Soon after this, history became entwined with literature. Sir Walter Scott was already well-known as a poet and a collector of traditional Scottish folk songs when he published in 1814 his first historical novel, “Waverley” (with the subtitle “’tis sixty years since”), giving a dramatic account of the ‘45. The Prince Regent, later George IV, was a great fan, and when in 1822 he became the first British monarch for well over a century to visit Scotland, Walter Scott was put in charge of organising the festivities, and George announced that he would wear the kilt! Sir David Wilkie produced a suitably grandiose painting of the King in a magnificent, but frankly entirely bogus, romanticised version of a highland chieftain’s garb, which has set the tone for Scottish identity ever since.

But by this time, the clan society of the highlands was already dead, or terminally ill. Once the highlands were at peace, a chieftain’s importance was no longer dependent on how many armed men he could raise from his estates, but by how much money his land could earn. By 1800 the “Highland clearances” were getting into full swing, as the poorer clansmen were evicted from the glens to make room for sheep. It is ironic that, at the same time as the kilt and the tartan were becoming fashionable attire, the last genuine Highlanders were being evicted from their crofts, not by foreign absentee landlords as in Ireland, but by their own clan chiefs.

Charles’s unhappy later years were passed in Rome. He reconverted to Catholicism. A few people hailed him as King when his father James died in 1766. English tourists in the city sometimes had the curiosity to seek him out. They found a sad old man, prematurely aged by alcoholism, convinced that his failure was due to betrayal, and distinguished only by his tendency to burst into tears if anyone mentioned Scotland.

He died in 1788, leaving a failed marriage and no legitimate children, and the Jacobite claim was inherited by his brother Henry. But Henry had never taken much interest in politics; he had entered the priesthood (much to Charles’s annoyance) and was now a rich and respected Cardinal. His extremely comfortable life in Rome came to an abrupt end in 1798, when French revolutionary troops entered the city, and he was forced to flee to Sicily.

How far Jacobitism had become no more than a romantic legend is shown by what followed: the British monarch, George III, distressed by the thought that a relative of the royal family had been reduced to penury in old age, granted him a government pension of £5,000 a year. Henry died in 1807. Inside the great west door of St. Peter’s in Rome there

is a noble monument by Canova to “three uncrowned kings”: James III, Charles III and Henry IX. Fittingly, it was paid for by King George IV. There could be no clearer sign that Jacobitism was dead.

### Summary

- 1688 Birth of Prince James Edward Stuart. William III lands at Torbay. King James II flees to France: William occupies London
- 1689 Convention Parliament summoned. Bill of Rights: William and Mary proclaimed joint Sovereigns. War declared on France. Scottish Claim of Right. Battle of Killiecrankie. Siege of Londonderry
- 1690 Battle of the Boyne
- 1691 Treaty of Limerick
- 1692 Massacre of Glanloe
- 1694 Bank of England created. Death of Queen Mary
- 1697 Treaty of Ryswick with France
- 1701 Act of Settlement. Grand Alliance vs. France signed. Death of James II: France recognises James Stuart as King of England
- 1702 Death of William III: Anne Queen. War declared on France
- 1704 Battle of Blenheim
- 1707 Act of Union with Scotland
- 1708 Attempted Jacobite landing in Scotland
- 1710 Tory government formed
- 1711 Marlborough dismissed as commander
- 1713 Treaty of Utrecht signed
- 1714 Whig government formed. Queen Anne dies: George I King
- 1715 Death of Louis XIV of France. Jacobite rising defeated at Preston and Sherrifmuir
- 1717 Triple Alliance: Britain, France, Netherlands
- 1718 Undeclared war vs. Spain
- 1719 Spanish landing in Scotland defeated
- 1720 South Sea Bubble collapses. Charles Edward Stuart born
- 1721 Walpole Prime Minister
- 1725 Malt Tax riots.
- 1737 Porteous riot in Edinburgh
- 1739 War of Jenkins' Ear vs. Spain
- 1740 Death of Emperor Charles VI sparks off War of Austrian Succession
- 1742 Walpole resigns as Prime Minister
- 1743 Battle of Dettingen
- 1744 French invasion plan fails. England declares war on France
- 1745 Charles lands in Scotland, takes Edinburgh, advances to Derby, then retreats
- 1746 Pelham resigns as Prime Minister, then is reinstated. Battle of Culloden. Charles goes into hiding, and escapes to France
- 1748 Treaty of Aachen ends war
- 1750 Charles secretly in London

1752 Elibank Plot  
1757 Outbreak of Seven Years' War  
1766 James Edward Stuart dies  
1788 Charles dies  
1807 Cardinal Henry Stuart dies