

S. G. MACLEAN

The
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To Ailie and Steven



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Introductory Note

The Battle of Culloden, which took place on 16 April, 1746 on Drummoissie Moor near Inverness, brought to an end the last great Jacobite rising in support of the House of Stuart. Over six decades, a series of serious attempts had been made by their supporters to restore to the Stuarts, the throne lost to them by the flight of James II in 1688. Taking their name from James – *Jacobus* – supporters of the House of Stuart became known as Jacobites.

While there remains a perception that Jacobitism was a Highland phenomenon, Jacobites hailed from all over Britain and Ireland, and Highland clans were, in fact, active on both sides from the early battles of the ‘Glorious Revolution’, and throughout various false starts and risings (1708, 1715, 1719, 1745) until the aftermath of Culloden itself. Some clans stayed on the same side throughout – the Argyll Campbells, for instance, were the greatest supporters of the Whig/Hanoverian lines, in which they were joined by the Mackays and, in the two major risings of the ’15 and the ’45, by the Munros, whereas others – the Farquharsons, MacPhersons, MacLeans, Camerons and Lochaber MacDonalds, amongst others, were consistently Jacobite. Other clans – most notoriously the Frasers under Lord Lovat, ‘The Old Fox’, changed allegiances, and some, such as the Grants, the MacLeods, and the Mackintoshes, were divided.

Although the Jacobite cause drew support from all over the British Isles, a series of key facts underline its strong association with Scotland and the Highland clans. Firstly, several leading clan figures were forced into exile at

each unsuccessful attempt of the Stuarts to regain their throne. However, whilst a chief might have been away in Italy, France, Germany or the Low Countries, his power base – including financial support and a ready supply of trained fighting men – in the geographic region dominated by his clan remained available to be called up by him. For this reason, the risings tended to start in the Highlands, and also to garner greater active support there than they did further south. Secondly, a distinct ‘Scottish’ dimension was added following the Treaty of Union of 1707, when some leading Scots felt they had not benefitted from the Union as they had expected to, and consequently adopted the Jacobite cause. Finally, whilst individuals from all over Britain and Ireland suffered for their support of the Stuarts, it was the Highlands that paid the heaviest price. The determination of the Duke of Cumberland after the Battle of Culloden to break the clans so that they could never again rise to threaten his family’s hold on the British throne manifested in a scorched-earth policy in the summer of 1746, and a hunting down of Jacobites by military parties led by men so consumed with the desire for revenge as to have been described by one leading historian as ‘psychotic’. The atrocities perpetrated on men, women and children by government troops following the Battle of Culloden have filled many pages and resulted in Cumberland’s nickname of ‘The Butcher’. But Cumberland’s squads never caught the prey they were most assiduously hunting – Charles Edward Stuart, the Bonnie Prince Charlie of legend, evaded them for five months as he skulked in the west Highlands and Hebrides before escaping by ship to France.

Amongst measures to break the clans and prevent future risings, the wearing of tartan and the playing of bagpipes were proscribed, Highlanders were forbidden to carry weapons, a commission was set up to value and sell off the estates forfeited by the leading Jacobite chiefs and a programme of road building and fortification was intensified, the map-making work of the latter forming the basis of the Ordnance Survey. The heritable jurisdictions of the chiefs were abolished.

In the aftermath of the ’45 rising, as had happened after the ’15, the provisions of the Treaty of Union were subverted to allow trial in England for acts committed in Scotland, and large numbers of prisoners were shipped

south under dreadful conditions to stand trial where they were less likely to provoke riots. Many died a traitor's terrible death. Many more, women and young boys as well as men, were transported to the Caribbean and North America to be sold into indentured servitude from which most never returned, following routes that had already begun to be traced, and setting a pattern for the full involvement of Highlanders and the Highlands in the Caribbean trade and the British Empire.

In the early years following Culloden, though, Jacobites continued to hope and to plan, as their charismatic, mercurial, flawed prince travelled incognito through Europe, trying to drum up support for just one more throw of the dice, while his Hanoverian enemies continued to pour huge resources into stopping him.

Main Character List

JACOBITES

Iain MacGillivray Bookseller of Inverness

Hector MacGillivray Iain's father

Mairi Farquharson Iain's grandmother

Aeneas Farquharson Mairi's kinsman and servant

Catriona Lamont,

Janet Grant, The Grandes Dames. Mairi's lifelong friends

Eilidh Cameron

Donald Mòr Bookbinder

Richard Dempster Bookseller's Assistant

Bailie John Steuart Merchant

HANOVERIANS

Major Philip Thornlie Engineer with the Military Survey

Captain Edward Dunne British Army officer

James Munro Sheriff-Depute of Ross

Major Calum Mackay British Army officer

Gavin Bremner Doorkeeper at Castle Leod

Mrs Elizabeth Rose of local landed gentry

Julia Rose Elizabeth's daughter

OTHER INHABITANTS OF INVERNESS

Ishbel MacLeod Confectioner

Tormod MacLeod Ishbel's son

Barbara Sinclair Milliner

Hugh Sinclair Barbara's father

Arch MacPhee Town Constable

Prologue

London, May, 1716

Mairi Farquharson handed her friend a cup of warmed brandy. ‘You must have courage, Janet. Only a little longer and all will be well.’

But Janet Grant’s hands were shaking so that she could hardly take hold of the cup, never mind raise it to her lips. Her face was white as a winding sheet and her eyes huge with terror. ‘But what if I cannot do it, Mairi?’ She indicated her swollen stomach, the miraculous pregnancy after so many that had been lost. ‘What if I should give myself away and fail him? What if Colin should never see his child?’

Mairi took back the cup, placed it on the sideboard and took hold of Janet’s hands in hers.

‘Listen, if you do not do this, he will never see the child anyway.’ Janet’s husband faced trial for his part in the late, failed Jacobite rising under the Earl of Mar. If he was not got out of the Tower tonight, he would face a traitor’s dreadful death. Mairi should not be having to spell this out to her friend. ‘There will *be* no mercy, there will *be* no eleventh-hour reprieve. We must do as we planned, Janet, and pray to God that Colin has greater courage than you have.’

The barb hit home. Janet straightened herself, a little rankled. ‘If Colin had not courage, I would have no cause to carry out the plan.’ Janet was to smuggle skeleton keys and a bottle of good brandy to her husband in the gaol,

in the hopes that he would get his gaoler drunk enough that the fellow might not see him use them.

‘No,’ said Mairi, ‘you would not. Do this thing, Janet, and in a few hours we will all be on a boat bound for France, and the mob on Tower Hill disappointed of their entertainment.’

Janet’s resolve seemed to recover a little. ‘And you will be at the place you told me of?’

‘We will be exactly there,’ said Mairi, ‘and then we need never see this benighted town again, until the king’s return.’

After Janet had left, the skeleton keys secreted under her stays and the bottle of brandy in her basket, Mairi moved quickly. She pulled from under the straw mattress the bundle of brown woollen clothing she had picked up several weeks before and hurriedly removed her own. She did not regret the fine French silk gown or good Flemish lace petticoat she must set aside in place of a housemaid’s plain attire. She had grown up on the Braes of Glenlivet in simpler dress than even a London housemaid and had thought herself none the worse of it, until one day Neil Farquharson’s eye had fallen on her, and soon after raised her to a different life. Her silk-braided kid leather shoes she parted with without hardship for a pair of modest workaday items. Then she brushed loose her hair and tousled it. ‘It was these tresses of yours that bewitched me,’ Neil would sometimes say, turning his hand softly in the smooth auburn folds. ‘You’re a vain minx,’ he would laugh when he found her sitting at her glass, before encircling her waist in his arm and pulling her round to him. An hour, less, and she would have those arms around her again.

She was sorry to have to tie a handkerchief over her hair, and set a hat atop it, but for tonight she must pass for an Englishwoman. She put away the brush and bundled her own clothes under the thin bedcover in what might amount to her own recumbent shape. Then she threw some soot onto the dying fire and snuffed out the one candle in this small room at the top of a London draper’s house. They had lodged here, she and Janet, since they had followed their captured husbands south. The whole household was at this

moment at its family worship. Mairi blessed the Providence that had put her in a Puritan house and went swiftly through the kitchen and out at the back door into a city swarming with soldiers.

It was a murky night, a disgusting smog rising from the river to cloak the town. She was glad of it. To think she had thought Inverness dirty when first she had seen it! Inverness, a town of barely four streets and a handful of wynds and closes. This London of theirs, that King James had so set his heart on, was a lowering monster, a many-toothed beast waiting to consume the unwary.

They had been terrified of this town, herself and Janet, when first they had disembarked at Tilbury. They had found friends though, persons of the lower orders that they knew they could trust. The merchant, Bailie John Steuart in Inverness, was in constant correspondence with their people in London and the continent. He had found an acquaintance who had got them in at the draper's and arranged for a boy to guide them to those parts of town where they needed to be: Newgate, the Marshalsea, Tower Hill. Through the dirt and noise of the city they had traipsed after their guide, and soon found themselves in the train of other women, other Jacobite wives fearful they would soon be made widows by the Elector of Hanover's British government.

Mairi had been a child, seven years old, when their clan had rallied to Dundee's call in 1789 in the cause of the late King James. She remembered watching the men marching away from the Braes of Glenlivet to their wasted triumph at Kirriemuir. And then, twenty-six years later, a married woman with children of her own, she had seen her own husband, a captain on horseback, ride away from Braemar with their son William, in the cause of another King James. It had not entered her head nor Neil's either that they should not go out for the king. If they should die on a London scaffold, so be it; better that than live the rest of their lives in shame and disgrace.

It had been Neil and William's good fortune to be consigned to Newgate with others of Clan Chattan, that great confederation of MacGillivrays, Mackintoshes, Farquharsons, MacPhersons and others. Neil had told her, when she'd been allowed in to visit, that it was a shameful thing for so many

Highland men to be kept prisoner by such specimens as guarded them at Newgate, and that those fellows would never have lasted half a day out on the hills. If it hadn't been for the manacles that held them, the Highlanders would have taught their gaolers a swift lesson.

'Then do so,' Mairi had said.

'What, how?'

'They will take off your manacles before you go to trial. I have heard it. That will be the moment.'

And that was exactly how it had happened. The guards, not understanding that the privations of their gaol were as nothing to what their prisoners had been inured to from birth, let off their manacles on the night before they were to go to trial. It was in the exercise yard, it being thought desirable that the half-starved men might have some practice in walking and standing upright before they must stand at the bar and hear their fate pronounced. They thought there was nothing to fear from these miserable captives.

There was no piper, but one of the youngest lads had given the battle cry, '*Creag Dubh Chlann Chatain!*' – the Black Rock of Clan Chattan. Before the guards had had the first idea of what was happening, they had been overwhelmed, and fourteen Highland savages, gentlemen every one of them, had disappeared into the London night.

A message had been got to Mairi at her lodging of where Neil, their son William and two others were hiding out, the fourteen having gone their different ways in their confused flight through the unfamiliar city. Mairi had already paid handsomely for a boatman to take them down the river, to meet with the sloop that would take them to France. All that remained was for Janet to do her part, that Colin Grant might also escape that night, because Neil had made it plain that he would not go without him.

From her lodging at the top of Do Little Lane, Mairi went directly towards the river, pausing to glance down Knight Rider Street before crossing to St Bennet's Hill. Her heart was in her mouth as she went along Thames Street, before turning down to Broken Wharf, all the while her hand firmly gripping the small knife she had secreted in her apron. She ignored the lewd calls of shore-porters and watermen as she hurried past, and only just managed not to

scream as a rat ran over her foot. There had been no rats in Glenlivet, and she had never yet learned to abide the creatures that so teemed in the streets and about the walls of Inverness, but she would pick up the first one she saw and kiss it full on the face should they get back there safe.

The streets were in darkness, but she would not trust herself even to a link-boy to light her way tonight. Mairi's eyes were good and her sense of direction sure, and it was not long before she felt herself enveloped by the damp air rising from the river. She kept to the darkness of the walls towards the narrow alleyway and the old rope store where Neil and the others had taken shelter. She was about to round the top of the alleyway when a figure emerged from it, almost colliding with her.

Mairi's small knife, her *sgian-dubh*, was out and an inch from the man's breast when her wrist was caught in a firm grip. 'Not tonight, Mistress Farquharson, for the love of God. I would live a while yet.'

Her terror subsided. 'Hector MacGillivray! It's your good fortune I didn't kill you.'

The man loosened his grip and she lowered her knife. 'What are you doing walking abroad?' she said. 'It's not time yet. Janet Grant has not long gone to the Tower.'

'I know,' he said. 'But the boatman swears he will only carry six, as he claims is agreed and paid for, and Colin Grant and his wife make seven.'

'He lies in his teeth!' said Mairi, ready to go and introduce the swindling boatman to some Highland manners.

'I know, but he has the upper hand on us and he knows it. We cannot risk being informed upon.' Hector swallowed. 'I will shift for myself.'

'But there is nothing arranged,' said Mairi. She had no liking for the swaggering young man, so pleased with his elegance and his French manners that had turned her own feckless daughter's head, but she didn't wish him into needless danger either.

'I will find something. They won't be looking for one of us alone, and even should they spot me, I can outrun them.'

That much was true, she knew. Hector MacGillivray could outrun every man in Strathnairn. The redcoats with their clunking guns and heavy shoes

would come nowhere near him.

‘What does my husband say to this?’ she asked.

‘Neil doesn’t know. It is only myself that has spoken with the boatman. I am younger than most of the men in that hut, Mistress Farquharson, and faster than any of them and I carry no injury. I will be halfway to France by the time any of them notice I’m gone.’

Still Mairi could not like him, but it was a courageous thing he did, and she let him go.

Thirty Years Later: Drummossie Moor, 16 April, 1746

The music was different, and Iain MacGillivray could not understand it. He tried to turn his head towards it but a searing pain down one side of his face almost overwhelmed him. He sank his head again into the wet heather and the moss until the surge of it passed. What was he doing on the heather though? The hail was still hurling itself down as it had done the whole day, biting into his face, but the other elements were all wrong. He should not be smelling the earth like this. He should not be tasting blood. And the howling he could hear was not the battle-cry that had last roared in his ears, it was a wounded, animal howling. He had heard it before, at Prestonpans, at Falkirk, but it had never been as bad as this. How long had he been here? He didn’t know. One moment he had been charging across the moor, the pipes of Clan Chattan driving him forward, with his cousin Lachlan ahead of him, and now he was here, lying on the cold wet earth.

But where was Lachlan? He shifted and heard a low grumble beside him. Lachlan. Thank God. His cousin had somehow managed to pull some of his own plaid out from underneath himself to drape over Iain. When had he done that? It was impossible even to tell what time it was. The sky above them was going from one depth of grey to the next, and beneath them was black earth, brown heather and the rust of blood. A thousand miles they had marched, far to the south and back home again, to this, Culloden. He managed to turn enough to look Lachlan in the eye and what he saw there portended nothing good.