

Charles Edward Stuart's Flight

Charles Edward Louis Phillipe Casimir Stuart was born on 20th December in 1720. Supported by Jacobite adherents, he attempted to regain the throne of his father, who, according to Jacobite beliefs, was the legitimate successor of James II, King of England, Scotland, and Ireland. In the end, Charles Edward Stuart's attempts to acclaim his father's throne led to devastating losses on the part of the Jacobites who mainly consisted of Scottish clansmen, when the Highlanders encountered the Hanoverian army at Culloden Moor. The Battle of Culloden went down in history as a cruel and brutal strike against the Highland army that destroyed many clans.

Historical Background

Charles Edward Stuart was the son of James Francis Edward Stuart and the Princess Clementina Sobieska of Poland. His father, who is commonly known as the Old Pretender, was the only surviving son of James II, who reigned England, Scotland, and Ireland from 1685 to 1688. When James II died in 1701, his remaining son was considered the prospective king of the realm by his Jacobite adherents. However, that was not his opponents' opinion. The adherents of the Hanoverians supported William III and Mary II, who acclaimed the throne in 1689. The resulting hostility forced James Francis Edward Stuart into exile which he found in France and Italy. Although supported by Louis XIV of France, he never prevailed to acclaim the throne. In 1745 at the age of twenty-five, his son Charles Edward Stuart, later to be known as the Young Pretender, attempted to regain his father's throne, encouraged as he was by Louis XV of France, who was in war with England, at that time reigned by George II. Despite the dreadful obstacle of ship wrecking that reduced Charles' plan, he eventually reached the west coast of Scotland in the armed brig *Doutelle* and landed, together with a few adherents, in Loch nan Uamh, which is located between Moidart and Arisaig, on 25th July 1745.

From there, he marched towards Edinburgh with the gradually increasing Highland army whose nucleus consisted of Macdonalds of Clanranald and Keppoch, and Lochiel's Camerons. Panic stricken as it was, Edinburgh offered no resistance, although the castle could not be conquered. After the successful battle of Prestonpans they reached London marching through Carlisle and Manchester. There, he was out of luck as the Highland army refused to encounter the three-thousand men strong Hanoverian army laying at Finchley to defend London. The Highlanders went back to Scotland on behalf of Lord George Murray, the

Prince's lieutenant-general, who over-ruled the Prince together with others. Nevertheless, after a small victory at Falkirk they advanced to Inverness, followed by the Hanoverian army led by the Duke of Cumberland, who had taken command of it in the north. Put under pressure, and nearly starved to death because of bad supplies, the Jacobites mustered quickly to encounter their enemies at Culloden Moor on 16th of April 1746. On account of terrible bodily conditions caused by hunger and strain, they eventually lost the extremely bloody battle, struck by the merciless Hanoverian army. When Bonnie Prince Charlie, that is what he was and still is called among his adherents in present times, realised his failure, he took refuge at the farm of Balvraid near Culloden Moor, from where his long and confusing flight began. Today, several massive gravestones spread over Culloden Moor remain in silent remembrance of hundreds of Scottish clansmen who lost their lives in the dreadful Battle of Culloden.

***“The Prince in the Heather”* by Eric Linklater**

Eric Linklater reconstructs Bonnie Prince Charlie's flight from Culloden Moor very detailed and vividly, mentioning every single step he took away from this bloody battlefield in his book *The Prince in the Heather*. The following description emphasises the most important steps of his flight according to Linklater to create a rough overview of his confusing and long flight to France.

When the Prince perceived that all hope to win the battle in Culloden Moor had vanished, he left the battlefield together with some companions for the farm of Balvraid from which his long flight began. In the early afternoon after the battle, the Prince and his party headed southwards to the Ford of Faillie, which was near the river Nairn, to reach the house of Lord Lovat, one of his kinsmen, who had sent his son to support the Prince. After some glasses of wine, the Prince had to leave the house as Lord Lovat's hospitality was rather curt at that time. As the battle was over quicker than expected, nobody knew where to meet and how to reorganise. Thus, the Prince sent message to his men to avoid total confusion and to attain a re-mustering at Fort Augustus. Early next morning, he reached Invergarry castle, which unfortunately was already burnt down by the Duke of Cumberland, who had led the Hanoverian army against the Highlanders in the Battle of Culloden. Passing Loch Lochy and Loch Arkaig, the Prince and his fellows arrived at Achnacarry House, which was Cameron of Lochiel's residence. He was one of the first clansmen to join the Prince in his venture, but now he lay helpless and wounded in the burnt ruins of his house. Still lacking any considerable support, the Prince took a rough path along the north shore to Kinloch Arkaig

where Donald Cameron of Glen Pean's residence was located. Together with only three remaining fellows which were Captain O'Sullivan, Father Allan Macdonald, and Ned Burke, whose occupation it was to carry one end of a sedan-chair in Edinburgh, he stayed there over night to wait for possible messages from his men. And indeed, a letter from Lord George Murray, the Prince's lieutenant general, arrived in the late afternoon of the 18th April. Having slowed down the Prince's reckless venture earlier, he was now furious about the devastating result of the battle, which he considered to be on account of Captain O'Sullivan's incompetence and the Prince's support of it. As a consequence, Lord George Murray offered the resignation of his commission. This letter is supposed to be the reason for the Prince's further steps on his flight because the re-mustering at Fort Augustus failed and by then it was clear that Scotland could only be won with help of France.

Heading for the coast to probably charter a ship to France, they had to march through rough Highland areas again, passing the braes of Morar and the small glen of Meoble south of Loch Morar to reach Borradale on the north shore of Loch nan Uamh. There, where the Sound of Arisaig is opened off, the Prince had disembarked his brig *Doutelle* only nine month ago. At Borradale, many survivors of the battle sought refuge, so he could recover from the exhaustive march through the amazing landscape of the Scottish Highlands as well. Still planning to re-muster his Highland army, he wanted help from the great lairds of the island Skye, MacDonald of Sleat and McLeod of Macleod, but only almost seventy-year-old Donald McLeod, tenant of Gualtergill on Loch Dunvegan in Skye and a seaman, came to help the lost Prince. Supported now by a good seaman who knew the Hebridean seas and a little more save, as Cumberland's troops headed to St. Kilda where they thought the Prince sought refuge, they left the main land for Benbecula on Long Island in the Outer Hebrides. O'Sullivan, O'Neil, Father Allan MacDonald, Ned Burke, Donald MacLeod, and 7 boatmen were with him and they went against Donald McLeod's advice to wait for better weather. Luckily, they survived this desperate voyage through the Cuillin Sound and disembarked the ship on 27th April 1746. For his new venture to re-muster the Highland army and to get money, he met several important clansmen amongst them Clanranald, his brother MacDonald of Boisdale, and Donald Campbell, who all offered their help. They indeed chartered a boat for the Prince, but none of their plans prevailed in the end because the islanders were suspicious and there was already a reward of £ 30,000 on Charles' head.

The ever remaining danger of the Hanoverian army which still searched all possible places for Charles and the terrible hunger convinced him to be more careful. On 28th June, after he rode up and down the islands anxiously and in constant danger of being captured by the English, he

crossed to Skye in a very unconvincing disguise and the brave company of Flora MacDonald, the daughter of Ranald MacDonald of Milton in South Uist. He was dressed up as Flora MacDonald's maid Betty Burke. When they landed on the shore of Skye, the Prince had to stay near the shore because the local militia was near by. They decided to take the Prince to MacDonald of Kingsburgh's house where they had to walk through the heather. This appeared to look odd as the Prince walked like a man and when they reached Kingsburgh's house, his wife Mrs MacDonald was apparently shocked by the appearance of Betty Burke, whom she described looking "odd muckle trallop of a carlin" (Maine 1972:139). However the Prince had to leave Kingsburgh's house soon, for it was too dangerous for him to stay too long at one particular place. Although he left in women's clothes again, he soon changed into a respectable Highland ensemble which he got from Mrs MacDonald's son-in-law because his disguise was not convincing at all. Passing Raasay, Nicolson's Rock, Sligachan, and Loch Ainort, they reached Elgol, this time with the Prince in disguise of a servant called Lewie Caw, from where they embarked a ship heading for the main land of Scotland. Now they were about to meet some other clansmen, amongst them Clanranald and Glenaladale, who would hopefully be able to help them.

In the early morning of the 5th of July, when they landed at Mallaig, they couldn't find shelter for a couple of days, which forced the small group, now consisting of different men than before, to ride up and down, back and forth to finally seek refuge at Meoble where they unfortunately were surrounded by enemies, still not able to get in contact with any supporters. Pursuit by an advancing enemy, they were now forced to find a way to Fort Augustus. Luckily, they met Donald Cameron of Glen Pean for whom they had already searched desperately because he was thought of being able to help them breaking through towards Fort Augustus. And indeed, he knew something about their enemy that would probably help them. Threatening enough, the enemy had established camps from the head of Loch Eil to the top of Loch Houran at intervals of half a mile and soldiers were regularly patrolling. Always walking up and down the local hills to stay as secure as possible, they passed camp by camp sometimes near enough to hear the redcoats talking to eventually reach Glenshiel in the proximity of Shiel Bridge, which they later crossed to reach Poolewe where the Prince hoped to find a French ship. However, the Prince's hope was disappointed again and they were guided by Donald MacDonald, who was also on the flight and who took them to Glenmoriston. Although the Prince was in constant danger of being captured by the redcoats (the English), he was not threatened by betrayal as he encountered a group of loyal Scotsmen who, although they could have easily earned the reward of £ 30,000 for Charles Stuart, swore

allegiance according to Highland customs. “That their backs should be to God and their faces to Devil; that all the curses the Scriptures did pronounce might come upon them and all their posterity if they did not stand firm to help the Prince in his greatest dangers” (Linklater 1965: 129). Throughout the Scottish history, one thing has always been for sure – a Scotsman who had sworn an oath stood firmly against any possible threat to answer his duties no matter what that meant for him.

Guarded and guided by the most loyal men, the Prince took shelter in caves along his way and decided to send men to Poolewe again to finally find a French ship. Meanwhile it was August and he arrived at the most northerly point of his wanderings, Beinn Acharain, which is north-west of Invercannich. There the Prince got message from Poolewe that a French ship had indeed been there, but that it had also already left again. However, two officers of the ship were now about to meet the Prince at Lochiel’s country, which was located in the south. He met the French officers who had nothing of importance to tell amongst other men who joined the Prince on his further way. Amongst them was Cameron of Clunes, also called Cluny, who was “the only person in whom he could repose the greatest confidence” (Linklater 1965: 136). By now, the Duke of Cumberland and the main body of Lord Albemarle’s army had also gone, leaving only some companies to watch the region. The last journey took the Prince through the Ben Alder Forest, Glen Roy, and Achnacarry to Borradale where he eventually embarked the ship *L’Heureux* to France. Cluny was left in Scotland to prepare for the Prince’s return, but although eight years passed, the Prince did never return to Scotland.