



Unfortunately a combination of circumstances prevented Christopher from attending the tour and we are most grateful to Graham Dunlop and Toby Macleod for stepping in late in the day.

The first thing that struck a lot of us is that Inverness is a long way away. Links from London are not too bad but if you travel from anywhere else, as I did, then you may find that aeroplanes do not fly every day and the train journey may exceed what is comfortable in a day. Despite these difficulties about 15 of us filled the small but comfortable coach that Graham had insisted would be required for our visit to Killiecrankie.

The second thing was how many Jacobite risings there were. Most of us were aware of the '15 and the '45 but did you about those in 1689, 1708 and 1719? All were linked to support provided by the European powers, either in the form of supplies, troops or full-scale invasions. It has to be said that the weather and the Royal Navy, probably in that order, played decisive roles in most if not all of the risings.

Our tour could not begin to cover all the actions between 1689 and 1746 but we found that the modern A9 between Inverness and Perth saw a good deal of action in several campaigns which revealed something of the characteristics of the armies involved. Vicky Henshaw explained to us that society, both in England and Scotland, was undergoing profound changes with the Glorious Revolution of 1688, the Act of Union in 1707 and the import of the Hanoverian dynasty in 1714 all challenging traditional views of their respective nationalities. Nevertheless, there were common features to the risings – a candidate from the House of Stuart would make a claim to the English, later British throne and would generally be successful in obtaining support from the Catholic powers of France and / or Spain. They might receive a little support in England and a good deal from the Scottish Highlands whilst the Lowlands tended to be split between supporters of the English monarchy and the putative Scottish one. A further complicating factor was that many Scottish supporters had less interest in the Stuart claim to England than their candidate's intentions regarding the Scottish kingdom.

Battle of Killiecrankie 27th July 1689 ³

Following the accession of William and Mary to the English throne they were also proclaimed joint sovereigns of Scotland by a Scottish Convention meeting in Edinburgh. John Graham of Claverhouse, Viscount Dundee set about raising the Highlands for James II but by July had only around 2,000 men and James had only sent 300 under a Colonel Cannon to support him. The action centred around Blair castle, a key location as a base for any expedition into the Highlands (see map). The owner, the Marquis of Atholl supported the Government but felt obliged immediately to depart for Bath to take the waters. His men, numerous and strong supporters of the Stuarts took over the Castle and a small blockading force under Murray fell back to Killiecrankie to enable any relieving force to pass safely through it.

Such a force was indeed being assembled at Perth by General Mackay. An experienced soldier, he had actually served with Dundee in the Dutch Wars and had already declined to engage the Highlanders with his inexperienced troops earlier in the summer. But now, with 3,500 men, he felt obliged to march north from Perth to take Blair and secure Atholl for the

³ There is quite a detailed, if unreferenced discussion of the battle at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/killiecrankie.htm>. The site also enables access to a free rendition of the Braes o' Killiecrankie albeit one perhaps more suited to a Morningside parlour than a Highland campfire.



Government before Dundee could gain the significant reinforcements that it might provide. Unfortunately for him, Dundee had reached Blair Castle on the 26 July and decided to fight Mackay north of the Pass if he should dare to pass through it even though he was outnumbered 2 to 1.

Having rested his troops Mackay set off through the Pass on the 27 July. In those days there was no road other than the roughest of tracks and Mackay's men did well to reach the cornfields (now pasture and scrubby woodland) on a plateau at the end of the Pass by lunchtime where they halted to await the baggage train. During the afternoon Dundee rallied his Highlanders who did their best to intimidate the raw Lowland Scots troops waiting under arms below them.

It was dusk before the Highlanders charged, waiting until Mackay's men had the sun in their eyes. Tired, no doubt alarmed by the mooning and other antics of the half-naked savages on the ridge above, Mackay's army was reduced to rout in around 15 minutes. Killiecrankie was indeed decisive due to the death of Dundee from a musket ball. Accounts differ as to when this occurred but 'Black John of the Battles' had always believed in leading from the front. Accounts also suggest that the Highlanders lost around one third of their strength but if this is so it must surely be due to clansmen retiring with their spoils rather than combat losses. Mackay only managed to reach Stirling with 400 men a few days later. Although others straggled in it is thought that around 2,000 Government troops were lost; few would have escaped at all if the Highlanders had not stopped to loot the baggage train.

Dundee's successor, Colonel Cannon, was in no sense a leader of a national uprising and it petered out. Nevertheless, he pushed south with 4,000 men to Dunkeld and to which pleasant town on the banks of the Tay we repaired to lunch.

Battle of Dunkeld 21 August 1689 ⁴

Most of us had at least heard of the Battle of Killiecrankie even if we were unfamiliar with details such as where it was or who had fought whom. But unless any of us were concealing a deep knowledge of the 26th Foot (The Cameronians) I do not think that any of us had ever heard of this battle which, as Graham told the story appeared to bear so many parallels with Rorke's Drift that some members of the audience were encouraged to cast the characters in the story and even to speculate as to a producer.

After Killiecrankie the newly formed Earl of Angus's Regiment (later the 26th), formed of Covenanters⁵, was posted to Dunkeld under Colonel Cleland, aged 27. The small town was not walled but, notwithstanding that it was the Sabbath, the troops fortified the abbey church, ruined then as now and constructed breastworks linking the other ecclesiastical buildings around it in order to form a perimeter. Whilst engaged upon this work a troop of cavalry appeared with news to the effect that ~~Zulus~~ Jacobites had been seen in strength to the northwest. The cavalry then departed, insisting that they needed to deliver their news to HQ in Perth. Col Cannon's Jacobite Army of about 4,000 then appeared upon the hills north of the town and set up their few guns about 600 yards away on the Hill of Lonsdale. The Jacobites then launched a well-planned attack from both west and east, driving in the Covenanters'

⁴ A brief description of the battle is to be found at http://www.scotwars.com/html/battle_of_dunkeld.htm

⁵ Extreme Presbyterians who were, by the late 17th century, seen as fanatical even by the standards of the time.
Ed



outposts. There followed a period of heavy fighting lasting 16 hours during which the defenders held off the famous Highland charge from behind their breastworks. But some of the Jacobites managed to seize some buildings in the town overlooking the Abbey grounds and were able to direct fire into the perimeter. Cleland was wounded and then killed leading the defenders who fixed straw brands onto the ends of their pikes, charged out and set light to the buildings held by the enemy musketeers. Most of the small town was thus burnt down. It is said that the defenders had to melt lead from the roofs of buildings to make more bullets. Marks from musket balls are still to be seen on the eastern gable of the cathedral. Eventually the Jacobites drew off, leaving leaving three hundred dead and saying that they '*could fight against men but was not fit to fight any more against devils*'. The Covenanters then threw their caps in the air and joined in praising God and thanking Him for giving them the victory. As Graham explained, memories of exploits like this are long and we noted a wreath on Cleland's grave in the Abbey church laid by the Orange Order.

This concluded our look at the 1689 rising but did you know that the abortive 1708 rising featured a French invasion force which was turned back by bad weather? Neither did we look at the 1715 rising or, indeed, the action at Glenshiel (1719) in the western Highlands where a Spanish detachment of 300 regular soldiers covered the main Jacobite position.

Siege of Blair Castle (16-31 March 1746)

Our journey from Dunkeld took us back through the Killiecrankie Pass and from 1689 to February 1746 when Charles Stuart, having abandoned his campaign in England, stayed there for a few days on his way to Inverness. The Jacobites felt that they could not hold ground south of the Highland line, however, and so Cumberland's men occupied it in late February.

I was intrigued by the story of the siege in Christopher Duffy's book.⁶ It took place about a month before Culloden and apart from being an interesting little story in itself the siege and the other operations conducted at the same time demonstrate some interesting characteristics of the two armies and the types of operation they could conduct.

The British were numerous and well-armed but with given to arrogance at the higher command levels whilst those on the ground were very aware of their lack of knowledge both of it and the inhabitants. On the other hand the Jacobites were few in number but not just a bunch of highlanders whose only tactic was the charge. Raiding was a way of life for the Highlanders and the raid on Blair Castle demonstrated their mobility, knowledge of the ground and the benefits they had from operating in friendly country. They were literally fighting for their homes and demonstrated high military skill.

Suffice to say that Murray's men infiltrated the Government positions, overcame all their posts as far as Killiecrankie in one night and persuaded Col Agnew, commander of the Blair Castle garrison that he was invested when Lord George Murray had only 35 men outside.

Over the next 24 hours the Jacobites concentrated their forces around the castle and posted their artillery - 1 x 4pdr and 1 x 6pdr - up on the hill near Old Blair. Today the direct sight line is impeded by the ornamental trees and the Hercules Garden planted in the 1770's but one can appreciate that these two guns were not going to have much impact on 7ft thick walls.

⁶ *The '45* by Christopher Duffy Cassell 2003 pp466-476.



The author of this article retains the copyright of the material. No part of this article may be reproduced or distributed in any form other than for private use without the express permission of the author. Permission may be sought via the [BCMh Newsletter Editor](#)

Nothing if not ingenious the Jacobites set up a forge in the church – ruined today - and fired hot shot at the roof of the Castle. They managed to set fire to it but the garrison managed to extinguish the flames – apparently even Col Agnew personally taking a ladle from the kitchen to drop the hot cannon balls into tubs of urine.

In fact, the arms display in the Castle hall includes one of these tiny balls complete with a scorched piece of panelling.

Wade's Roads

Government pacification measures after the Rising in 1715 had been hampered by the sheer inaccessibility of the Highlands. General Wade was therefore ordered to construct a network of forts and roads there. Few of these roads are actually in use nowadays although the modern roads often run alongside them. On the last day of the tour a few of us managed to do a short tour along the southern shore of Loch Ness and lunched at the good and plain Whitebridge Hotel – thought to be on the site of a contemporary King's House or Inn. There was indeed a bridge although it is no longer in use.

This road represents the course of the modern B862 and was the first stretch of road to be completed – by 1725 - between Fort George in Inverness and Fort Augustus at the south-western end of Loch Ness. The picture reveals that the road was designed simply for relatively small numbers of marching troops and was wide enough for smaller carts. From the modern A9 running south from Inverness to Perth we were often able to see Wade's road from the window. Narrow they may have been but in the 18th century Wade's road network offered very fast communication in a country that was devoid of any routes other than drovers' tracks. Ironically, in 1745/46 it was the Jacobites who were able to make best use of the roads because most of the Government garrisons had been stripped for service abroad.



John Badley, Vicky Henshaw and Steve Best at Wade's bridge at Whitebridge.



Something of an exception was the magnificently sited if inadequately designed barracks at Ruthven⁷ built in 1727 on the site of a former castle. It was successfully defended in August 1745 by Sgt Terence Molloy and thirteen men but, still there six months later albeit commissioned as a Lieutenant, he was obliged to give it up after three rounds from a 6 pdr made as many holes in the wall. Ruthven barracks is still well-preserved although lacks a roof since the Jacobites torched it. Once you step inside the walls, however, you feel instantly that you are inside Fort Zinderneuf – occupying a tiny spot on the map and with rather too much time to gaze across an endless landscape populated by hordes of highlanders and other nameless horrors.

Culloden

We spent the whole of Monday 18 May at Culloden. It turned out to be a day of wildly changeable weather though fortunately most of the rain fell during Toby McLeod's lecture in the Visitor Centre during the morning. Having read Prebble's vivid descriptions of the scenes I felt a little disappointed that woodland now a) covers about one half of the battlefield (the Jacobite left / Government right) and b) obscures entirely the waters of the Moray Firth, which in 1746 accommodated Cumberland's supply ships. But we were able to examine the ground on the Jacobite right / Government left where the decisive action took place between the Regiments of Barrel and Munro and the Atholl Brigade and Camerons. The ground was more varied in nature than we had anticipated being firmer and grassy in that area and much boggy on the other side.

Further, there were undulations and it seemed that, if properly commanded, the Jacobite Army could have made much better use of the folds in the ground to get closer to Cumberland's line before attacking.

Part of the group also undertook a re-enactment of the flank march of Campbell's Foot and Kerr's Dragoons through the Culwhineac enclosures around the Jacobite right flank to the Culchunaig farmstead.

The Visitor Centre and the Guide booklet are quite strong on the context and the campaign itself but, perhaps surprisingly, are a little sketchy on the battle itself. A number of visitors wandering the field also seemed to be having difficulties with their audioguides. I would recommend Stuart Reid's Battlefield Guide *Culloden 1746 Pen & Sword 2005* when walking the ground as it is both a handy size and offers a very detailed coverage.

The Highland Survey⁸ and Fort George⁹

Appropriately our final stand was at Fort George built after the 1746 rising to replace an earlier castle located in the centre of Inverness but captured and destroyed by the Jacobites in 1745. As we approached it on the bus John Peaty talked to us about the Highland Survey and the eminent individuals involved in it. Members may be interested to know that 2009 is the bicentenary of the death of Paul Sandby (1731-1809) a noted English watercolourist but whose day job was sketching and mapping for the Board of Ordnance. He must have done a

⁷ Further details at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ruthven_Barracks

⁸ Link to the holdings of the National Library of Scotland <http://www.nls.uk/maps/roy/originals.html>

⁹ Further details at <http://www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk/nairn/fortgeorge/>



lot of work for the survey but I do not know where it is – perhaps this year's exhibition at Nottingham Castle will provide some answers¹⁰.

England is not known as a repository of Vauban style fortifications – after the Civil Wars we did not need them. So it is a little ironic that Fort George is perhaps the very finest of them all. There are others of course, Neuf Breisach in Alsace comes to mind but Fort George is not only open to the public but retains its original purpose as a garrison. Consequently it is not only in very good repair but is virtually unchanged since completion in 1769 – inevitably late and vastly overbudget.

Even now it is an awesome construction, in a completely different league from the shoddily constructed works at Ruthven, Fort Augustus and Fort William that had featured in the most recent rising and so often been found wanting. After five major and several minor Jacobite Risings between 1689 and 1745 the Hanoverian Government had clearly decided that it would do whatever it took to stop another.

Historiography and Sources (Toby McLeod)

No other topic in British history has engendered so much partisanship, mythology and romanticism as the Jacobite Rebellions. The historiography of the topic, naturally enough, reflects broader trends in writing about Scottish and British history in general.

Macaulay's *History of England* (2 vols, 1848) championed the Whiggish view that the Jacobites were backward, feudal and misguided rebels, who deserved everything they got. This view of the rebellions has been enormously influential in British historical writing and was not to be seriously challenged by scholars until the 1960s.

It was to be in the field of literature that the cause was rehabilitated, and where it acquired much of its mystique. Walter Scott's *Waverley* (1827) is probably his finest novel, and immortalised the Highland way of life that by then had all but disappeared. It was his literary work that popularised the romantic notion of Highland life among the English and Lowland Scots, and resulted in Queen Victoria's obsession with the romantic view of Scotland, currently enthusiastically shared by the royal family of Battenberg-Windsor.

The great Edinburgh novelist, Robert Louis Stevenson, exploited 19th century England's appetite for tales of derring-do set in the period of the Jacobite Rebellions in choosing this backdrop for *The Master of Ballantrae* (1889). Novels set in the period of the Jacobite Risings continued to enjoy popularity into the 20th century, and D. K. Broster's Jacobite trilogy, *The Gleam in the North*, *The Flight of the Heron*, and *The Dark Mile* (1927, 1925, 1929) are fine, sensitive and sympathetic pieces of writing and continue to sell well even today. Less well known is Jeffrey Farnol's *Over the Hills* (1930) set in the 1715 rising, and although hard to find nowadays, remains a spanking good read. Rabbin Burns himself celebrated the '15 in the humorous poem *Sherramuir Fight*, often set to music, this is a wry description of 'Bobbing' John Earl of Mar's disastrous generalship at the Battle of Sheriffmuir, the original manuscript of which was acquired for the National Library of Scotland earlier this year.

¹⁰ Link to the Exhibition at Nottingham Castle <http://www.nottingham.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=5897> and to Sandby's copy of Roy's map of Scotland <http://www.mapforum.com/03/maproom.htm>



It was to be the Englishman John Prebble who revitalised and revised the popular interpretation of the Jacobite Rebellions. His 'Fire and Sword' trilogy *Culloden* (1962), *The Highland Clearances* (1963) and *Glencoe* (1966) brought the Jacobite cause and Scottish History to a very wide audience, and his skills in story telling were put to good use in TV and cinema. Engaging, controversial and a deeply convinced Marxist, Prebble's fascination with Scottish history knew no bounds. He brought the book *Culloden* to the TV screens in a docudrama of the same name delivered as piece of news reporting 'live' from the battlefield. He also wrote the screenplay to the film *Zulu!* While scholars may balk at Prebble's easy style, political dogmatism and dramatic narratives, he remains widely read, and cannot be ignored.

Readers wishing to familiarise themselves with the background to the risings of 1689, 1715, 1719 and 1745 could do worse than turn to Michael Lynch's *Scotland: A New History* (1991) which exemplifies the best in modern historical writing. New thinking in British history of the early part of the period is contained in *Revolution: The Great Crisis of the British Monarchy* (2006) by Tim Harris and in Patrick Dillon's *The Last Revolution* (2006). Bruce Lenman's *The Jacobite Cause* (1986) is an impartial assessment of the whys and wherefores of the political disenchantment with the Glorious Revolution settlement and Scottish attachment to the House of Stuart, and this is expanded on in Daniel Szechi in his *The Jacobites, Britain and Europe 1688 – 1788* (1994). The military history of the period is covered in great detail in *Battles for the Three Kingdoms: The Campaigns for England, Scotland and Ireland - 1689-92* (2007) by John Barratt. Michael Barthorp's Osprey series book *The Jacobite Rebellions 1689-1745* (1982) covers all the risings in brisk fashion and is useful as a quick survey. Battlefield enthusiasts and walkers will find ample discussion of the battles of all of the risings in John Sadler's *Scottish Battles* (1996) and Stuart Reid's *Battles of the Scottish Lowlands* (2004)

Inevitably, most modern works focus on the '45 and Culloden and there are some very fine accounts available. Among these Jeremy Black's *Culloden and the '45* (1990) and John Sadler's *Culloden: The Last Charge of the Highland Clans 1746* (2008) represent the most comprehensive works. The ever prolific Stuart Reid's *Like Hungry Wolves* (1994) and *1745: A Military History of the Last Jacobite Rising* (1996) are also good solid accounts, despite one or two minor lacunae. Christopher Duffy brings all his vast knowledge and scholarship of the eighteenth century to bear in *The '45: Bonnie Prince Charlie and the Untold Story of the Jacobite Rising* (2003) and readers should not be daunted by its exhaustive 639 page length, it really is a work of outstanding erudition.

Also worthy of mention are Maggie Craig's *Damn' Rebel Bitches: Women of the '45* (2000) and *Bare-arsed Banditti: The Men of the '45* (2009) which are both refreshing and original takes on the subject. *Battles of the '45* (1962) by Katherine Tomasson and Francis Buist is a useful volume too, engaging and lively in style. There is also a fine Osprey in the Campaign Series entitled *Culloden 1746: The Highland Clans' Last Charge* by Peter Harrington which gets all the facts across in a no-nonsense fashion with attractive graphics.

As far as the battlefield of Culloden is concerned, some of the latest archaeological thinking is in Tony Pollard and Neil Oliver's *Two Men in a Trench* (2002) from the TV series of the same name. The new National Trust for Scotland handbook to the battlefield and visitors centre *Cùil Lodair/Culloden* (2008) is remarkably well-produced and manages to satisfy the lay visitor and serious historian at one and the same time. Rather imaginatively the Trust has



The author of this article retains the copyright of the material. No part of this article may be reproduced or distributed in any form other than for private use without the express permission of the author. Permission may be sought via the [BCMh Newsletter Editor](#)

also produced an audio recording *Voices of the 45*, containing song and spoken accounts from the time with accompanying historical notes.

The European context of the '45 is covered in M.S. Anderson's *The War of the Austrian Succession* (1995) and Reed-Browning's book of the same name, also published in '95, whereas those specifically interested in British military affairs should consult *War, State, and Society in Mid-Eighteenth-Century Britain and Ireland* (2006) by Stephen Conway.



Killiecrankie battlefield from the centre of the Jacobite position. Graham Dunlop explains how the highlanders advanced and then charged into the Government forces deployed in line just beyond the road – the trees were then cornfields. The Pass is marked by the dark, sinister wood above the bushy topped tree just behind Graham.