

Damn' Rebel Bitches

The Women of the '45

Maggie Craig



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God bless the King! God bless the Faith's Defender!
God bless - no harm in blessing - the Pretender!
Who that Pretender is, and who that King -
God bless us all - is quite another Thing!

Jacobite Toast

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household knee-deep in Jacobites and a mother whose head was more often in the 18th century than the 20th.

Preface

Prince Charles Edward Stuart, known to history as Bonnie Prince Charlie, landed on the Hebridean island of Eriskay in July 1745. One month later, at Glenfinnan in the western Highlands, he asked the clans to rally to his cause. The '45 was to be the last attempt to regain the throne of the United Kingdom for the House of Stuart.

Scotland's royal dynasty had made both love and war with its English counterpart for centuries. The resulting family relationship led to the Scottish King James VI becoming also James I of England after the death of the childless Queen Elizabeth I in 1603. Stuart monarchs ruled the combined kingdoms until 1688. James VII of Scotland and II of England, Bonnie Prince Charlie's grandfather, was devoutly Roman Catholic in a strongly Protestant country and not noticeably enthusiastic about reigning as a constitutional monarch. He was deposed in favour of his son-in-law, the Protestant William of Orange, and went into exile.

The equally Protestant House of Hanover, today's House of Windsor, subsequently came to the British throne. Their right to sit on it was challenged during the first half of the eighteenth century in a series of armed insurrections. Support for these was naturally found largely in Scotland, ancient home of the Stuarts.

These supporters took their name from *Jacobus*, the Latin version of the name of Bonnie Prince Charlie's father, grandfather and many of their Scottish predecessors. The term Jacobite should not be confused with Jacobean, which means something quite different. The Jacobites knew their opponents as Whigs and sometimes called the Hanoverian royal family the Brunswickers, referring back to their German origins.

It takes very little sifting through original documents, letters and contemporary news-sheets to discover that women were heavily involved in the '45. They were present at the Raising of the Standard at Glenfinnan and in Edinburgh while the Jacobites held court there after their stunning victory over government troops at the Battle of Prestonpans. Many of them, often accompanied by their children, were on the long march into England. When this abortive invasion attempt failed, some were left behind and later transported to the colonies.

The Stuart Cause went down forever on 16th April 1746 at Culloden, on Drumossie Moor near Inverness, the last battle fought on British soil. Not content with inflicting a crushing defeat on the Jacobites, the British army wreaked a terrible revenge on the Highlands throughout the summer and autumn of 1746. Both sexes, and all ages, suffered terribly at the hands of government forces.

It is sad, then, that female participation in the Year of the Prince has been mythologised into just one woman: the romantic figure of Flora MacDonald, who brought Bonnie Prince Charlie safely over the sea to Skye under the very noses of his red-coated pursuers. This book has no wish to denigrate the part she played. However, the concentration on her to the exclusion of all other women resulted in a working title *Not Flora MacDonald*.

Overwhelmingly, modern chroniclers of the '45 mention female involvement only *en passant* and glibly explain it away by resorting to the R-word – Romance. Women fell in love with the Bonnie Prince. He was young, handsome and dashing and their hearts were touched by his plight.

This ignores the fact that many of them were committed Jacobites before they even caught a glimpse of him – women like Jenny Cameron, who led men to the Raising of the Standard at Glenfinnan; women like Isabel Haldane of Ardsheal, who encouraged her husband to lead out the Stewarts of Appin. They acted of their own free will, making

a conscious decision to take the enormous risks inherent in supporting the Stuart cause. Many, like Lady Margaret Ogilvy, were supporting their husbands. Several, such as Lady Anne Mackintosh, acted in direct opposition to theirs.

Some of the women involved in the '45 are easy to respect, but less easy to like. Charlotte Robertson, Lady Lude, forced her tenants to join the Jacobite army and was quite prepared to threaten reprisals if they didn't. Anne Mackintosh's actions in raising her husband's clan led many of them to a horrible death at Culloden. Such women are not necessarily to be admired, but they were real people, taking the harsh measures they thought necessary to achieve their political aims.

But it's only Flora who smiles shyly out at us from a million shortbread tins – the ideal heroine. Pretty, but not too pretty, modest and maidenly, silent – and prepared to do as she was told.

The women of eighteenth century Scotland were a feisty bunch – outspoken, frank, always ready to speak their minds. In no way did they think of themselves as inferior to men. Their stories as related here do not exclude those men. Both sexes stood shoulder to shoulder during the events of 1745-46. Women may not have been out there on the battlefield, but they still ran some terrifying risks: being shot out of hand, being judicially murdered with all the pomp of the legal system, seeing their homes burnt in revenge for their involvement, suffering countless rapes and beatings, the loss of everything they held dear. These women have been written out of Scottish history. It's time their voices were heard again.

Author's Note – Dates

The Jacobite officers who celebrated Bonnie Prince Charlie's birthday in Perth in 1745 ([Chapter 21 – *Hell Hath No Fury*](#)) and the Jacobite ladies of Edinburgh and Leith who did likewise a year later ([Chapter 4 – *Charlie is My Darling*](#)) held their festivities on 20 December, rather than 31 December – choosing to mark the Prince's birthday by the old rather than the new calendar. There was a discrepancy of 11 days between the two.

Most European countries had changed over from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar by the time of the '45. The Protestant countries were, however, reluctant to do so, as the new calendar had been initiated by the Vatican and worked out by Jesuit scholars.

In 1600, Jamie the Saxt, seeing the benefits of Scotland operating on the same dating system as her European trading partners, took his Protestant country onto the new calendar. At the Union of the Crowns in 1603 and the Union of the Parliaments in 1707 it would appear that Scotland was obliged to go back to Old Style dating, probably operating on a mixture of the two calendars, similar to the situation with imperial and metric measurements today.

England bowed to the inevitable in 1752, when people went to bed on 2 September and got up on 14 September. Deeply distressed at thus being forcibly brought into line with Europe, vociferous protests culminated in riots with cries of 'Give us back our eleven days!'

All histories of the '45 date events in Scotland and England according to the old Julian calendar. Nowadays we therefore commemorate Culloden on its date, but not on the real anniversary of the event.

This book is dedicated to four people:

firstly, with love and gratitude, it's to the memory of my
parents, Molly Walker and Alex Craig – bonnie fechtters
both;

secondly, it's in affectionate remembrance of my uncle, Alex
McCulloch, who gave me *The Flight of the Heron* to read at a
formative age;

and last, but most certainly not least, it's for Will.
It had to be.

ONE

Something in the Air

*'May times mend - and down with the bloody
Brunswickers!'*

When Bonnie Prince Charlie landed at Eriskay in July 1745, it came as no great surprise to the chattering classes of 18th century Scotland. Ever since Cameron of Lochiel had placed an order for a large quantity of tartan cloth with a weaver in Glasgow in 1743, fuelling speculation that he was planning to kit out his men for a military campaign, the rumour mills had been working overtime.

Talk was cheap, and there was plenty of it in taverns, coffee houses and best bedchambers the length and breadth of Scotland. The parlour being a much later invention, it was the bedroom where ladies entertained their friends. They met at what they called the 'four hours', showing off by serving tea, the newly fashionable drink. Whilst coffee was old hat by the middle of the 18th century, tea was a hideously expensive and extremely desirable drink.

The older generation criticised it roundly. Duncan Forbes of Culloden called it a 'vile drug' and 'a contemptible beverage'. He, and others like him, were deeply distressed at the thought that the working classes and flighty misses were ignoring more wholesome drinks, such as claret and ale. The new-fangled fashion for tea and gossip, it was

thought, could only lead to unseemly frivolity and a general decline in moral standards.

Flighty misses took no notice. Not only were they at the forefront of fashion when they served tea in tiny china cups sweetened with honey, they were also enjoying the enormous pleasure of causing deep irritation to their elders. As for gossip, they were talking of little else but the young Prince come to reclaim the throne of his ancestors. Rebellion was in the air – not just against the political status quo, but a social and intellectual rebellion too.

The ideas which were to rise to the surface later in the century and expand into the Scottish Enlightenment were already bubbling under. Intoxicating ideas about equality between the sexes were beginning slowly to appear. Women were asking why marriage was seen as their only career choice and why the universities were closed to them. Like their brothers they too were hungry for learning. In England Eliza Haywood was publishing *The Female Spectator*, the first magazine written for and by women. Eliza, who had previously written a string of best-selling romances, was a huge advocate of education for women. ‘Why,’ she asked, ‘do they call us silly women, and not endeavour to make us otherwise?’

In the years immediately preceding the ‘45, the possibility of the young Prince coming to Scotland to lead a campaign was often described in near-religious terms. When people whispered ‘He is coming soon,’ that He most definitely had a capital H. The Jacobites believed that the ‘Lord of Hosts’ was on their side. Their struggle to restore the legitimate royal house was seen as a crusade and its adherents referred to it as the Cause. Indeed, when Lord Pitsligo led a regiment of gentlemen from Aberdeenshire and Banffshire to join the Prince in Edinburgh in September 1745, he paused before setting off, took off his hat, lifted his face towards heaven and said, ‘Lord, thou knowest that our Cause is just.’ The possibility of a ground-breaking and

fundamental change, not just in politics, but in attitudes too, made it an exciting time to be alive. This excitement was just as keenly felt by women as by men.

One might also argue that there was a fundamental difference between the Jacobite and the Hanoverian view of women. There were many strong women in the latter camp too, but they come across as more marginalised than their Jacobite sisters. Perhaps Jacobite male gallantry had something to do with this, but there are strong indications that this gallantry also allowed for the possibility that women might just conceivably be intelligent creatures whose opinions were worth listening to.

Lord Pitsligo, a scholar and a gentleman, for example, had a high opinion of women. In 1734 he published a volume of philosophical essays which, in true 18th century style, roved over many differing subjects. Of the human delight in laughter he wrote,

What shall we make of that readiness to laugh, when one slips a foot and tumbles over? We are even afraid he is hurt, and yet cannot refrain from laughing.

He also noted that young women, maturing earlier than their male counterparts, 'are apt to laugh at young men, and are great observers in general of what is heavy and blundering, or any way ridiculous either as to persons or things.' Writing of women in general, he observed that 'they are more active, more foreseeing and better managers than we. If a foolish education sometimes spoils them (and whom does it not spoil) the fault should be laid where it ought.'

Bonnie Prince Charlie's own politics were deeply traditional and conservative, based on the belief that kings had a divine right to govern their subjects. Many of the problems encountered during the campaign could have been avoided if he had been willing to listen to advice, but he was a prince of the blood royal, and always thought that he knew better.

His later behaviour towards his long-time mistress Clementine Walkinshaw, a Glasgow girl, sends out a clear message that he thought women should know their place. However, he was fully aware of the importance of female support and the power of female influence. It's one of the reasons why he gave so many balls everywhere he visited. The minuets and reels went along with the sword play. Dancing and fighting were completely in step with each other during the campaign.

Prince Charles' high Toryism didn't stop his supporters from seeing a bright and different new future under a restored Stuart dynasty. A rebellion might change more than just the government of Scotland. Everything seemed to be up for grabs – the stranglehold the Kirk had on people's lives and morals, freedom of religion for the Catholics and Episcopalians, the existing social mores, the position of women in society – everything might be going to change.

Reading through accounts of the '45 one is struck again and again by the youth of many of those involved – and also by the advanced age of many others.

Lord Pitsligo, for example, was well into his 60s. His comrade-in-arms Gordon of Glenbucket was well over 70, and a veteran of the 1715 Jacobite Rising. There were others like them. On the other hand, Lady Mackintosh, who raised a regiment for the Prince, was just 22. Lord and Lady Ogilvy, both supporters of the Cause, were just 20 years old, as was Lord Lewis Gordon, who commanded his own regiment drawn from the Huntly area.

It was the middle-aged who had the greatest difficulty in making up their minds. Perhaps they had most to lose. For the older generation loyalty to the Stuarts was still strong. For the younger generation loyalty and honour were important too. Alongside that, however, it was a great adventure. As modern observers we have to remember that we look on the whole affair with the benefit of hindsight. When we read about them it's with the knowledge of

Culloden looming on the horizon. They didn't know that and success in their endeavours seemed to them to be perfectly possible.

At Glasgow University in the 1740s the gifted Ulsterman Professor Frances Hutcheson was teaching religious tolerance and political liberty. Hutcheson believed that men and women were basically good, an idea which he expressed at evening classes open to both men and women. Both sexes flocked to the Old College in the High Street on frosty Sunday nights, delighting in Hutcheson's entertaining delivery of his ideas. The professor believed that people were not subjects, but citizens, and that a citizen under a tyrannical government should not only be expected to rebel – it was his duty to do so. It was an idea which was later to find a huge resonance in the American colonies.

For Jacobites, especially those Episcopalians and Catholics chafing under infringements of their rights to worship, Hutcheson's ideas of the rights of the citizen were very attractive. Indeed, Bonnie Prince Charlie was more than once rebuked for his high-handedness.

Free-born Britons, he was told, could not be treated as mere subjects. It is interesting to speculate how this idea would have clashed with his belief in divine right had he been successful in reclaiming the throne for the Stuarts.

For other Scots, it was London-imposed taxes which were unpopular. And for yet others, it was 'the sorrowfu' union', the political joining of England and Scotland which had been pushed through just 35 years earlier, which they hoped to overturn.

Hutcheson's liberal moral views were at odds with the Kirk's view of its fellow citizens – particularly women – as a seething mass of potential sin. Indulgence in pre-marital sex or adultery led to various punishments, most commonly having to stand on the stool of repentance in the kirk for several Sundays in a row. Pregnant unmarried girls who refused to name the fathers of their babies were questioned

by the elders whilst in the throes of labour. The reasoning behind this method of interrogation was faultless. Not just the pains, but the fear of dying and going to hell would soon loosen their tongues.

Side by side with such barbarity, the Kirk was strongly opposed to women being forced into marriage and laid great stress on the willingness of young women and men to enter into the contract. They weren't noticeably keen on the grand passion – one young bridegroom at Longforan near Dundee was fined for kissing his bride at the end of the marriage service. However, they considered mutual affection to be extremely important, seeing women as having a great civilising effect on their husbands and children – and through them on society in general.

This idea of the 'woman's touch' runs through much 18th century writing. A woman must always be womanly, to be sure, but she could do much to influence her husband's thinking and actions. Indeed, she had a duty to do so. Margaret Monro's father thought so strongly about it that he wrote her a series of letters on female conduct.

The Monros were living in Edinburgh in 1739 and Mr Monro's idea was that Margaret should copy out his letters. This would help her education by improving her handwriting whilst also instructing her on the correct way to behave. From the way this fond father addresses his daughter she sounds young, perhaps in her early teens. If so, she would have been a young lady in 1745 – perhaps one of those who went to see the Prince.

Her father was perhaps just a wee bit pompous for modern tastes, but he clearly loved his daughter dearly. He had held little dances for her and her friends when she was younger and approved strongly of such social activity. And his admonitions to her on keeping her room tidy would elicit a round of applause from any modern parent.

What a nauseous thing is it to enter a girl's chambers, where hoops lie on different chairs, petticoats, gowns, old shoes, and Lord knows what medley of odd things are scattered through the room; one would almost fancy they had got into the most dissolute place.

Admitting that 'there are so many faulty men' he gave her advice on how to deal with this if her husband turned out to be one of them. Leaving an unsatisfactory husband was not an option. A wife's duty was to tolerate any foibles and learn how to cope with them. For example, an unfaithful husband was not to be greeted by ranting and raving. It would be a much greater reproach to such a man if his wife behaved quietly and with dignity.

On the other hand, Mr Monro believed that a woman should cultivate her mind and heaped scorn on the idea that a wife should always agree with her husband's opinion. Any husband who expected this unquestioning compliance was a tyrant.

'Good mannered contradiction and argument give life to conversation,' wrote Margaret's father, reflecting quite clearly the Scottish love of discussion and debate. His advice to his daughter also shows that while the rules for women were strict, they weren't rigid - and they were beginning to bend.

Eighteenth century women had a freedom of expression which their Victorian great-granddaughters could only dream about. They felt free to air their opinions and often did so with great frankness.

The liberty which women had was perhaps only achieved again by modern women in the 1960s. It's all the more remarkable when compared with their legal position. A woman was subject to her father's control until she married, and her husband's thereafter. His right to physically chastise her was enshrined in law, so long as he did not use 'excessive' harshness.

On the other hand, a Scotswoman retained her own name even after marriage, and was not legally required to adopt

her husband's. Anne Mackintosh is just as often referred to as Anne Farquharson. Interestingly, this is still the legal position today. If Jean Smith marries Alan MacDonald, legal documents will describe her as Mrs Jean Smith or MacDonald. A Scotswoman keeps her own identity.

Relations between the sexes were free and easy. Chaperones were a feature of a later age and young men and women, whilst supervised to a certain extent, were allowed to walk, talk and ride out together in comparative freedom. Sexual freedom is a harder thing to quantify. People tended not to commit such things to paper, but it was a bawdy age and a passionate one.

Social life was lively – taverns for the working class and private parties, balls and soirees for the well-to-do. Both men and women of the middle class visited the oyster cellars which were so popular, particularly in Leith and Edinburgh. Talk was frank, fuelled by vast quantities of claret and brandy, and covered all matters – politics, love, morals – the sort of discussions which still take place around the kitchen table at midnight nowadays. Many visitors to Scotland commented on the frankness of the talk, even in mixed company. The ladies went home a little earlier, squired there by their cavaliers who then returned to the tavern to toast their beauty. This custom was known as 'saving the ladies'. Since each man would naturally propose a bumper to the fair maiden of his choice, this could take some time. 'Saving the ladies' became a euphemism for getting blind drunk.

While the ladies were still with them, however, other toasts were drunk. Three in particular were very popular in the early 1740s. These were 'To the memory of Bruce and Wallace', 'Prosperity to Scotland – and no Union!' and the most overtly Jacobite of all – 'May times mend – and down with the bloody Brunswickers!' And both men and women raised their glasses to those.

TWO

Warrior Maidens

*'Pray, say a thousand fine things for me to the
heavenly Lady Mackintosh . . .'*

Margaret and David Ogilvy were a golden couple. Both tall and slender, she was fair while he was red-haired, so handsome that the French called him '*le bel écossais*'. She was born Margaret Johnstone and came from Westerhall in Dumfriesshire. They married early in 1745, both of them just 20 years old. The young Lord and Lady Ogilvy were very much in love, and also very committed Jacobites. It was therefore no surprise to Bonnie Prince Charlie when David, who was the eldest son of the Earl of Airlie, greeted him in Perth in September 1745 with an offer of men and support.

When David marched for Edinburgh at the head of his Forfarshire Regiment a few weeks later, Margaret went along too. Before they arrived in Edinburgh to join Prince Charles at Holyroodhouse, she had also been at her husband's side. Eye-witnesses later testified to the fact that when David proclaimed Charles as Prince Regent and his father as King at the mercat cross at Coupar Angus, Margaret had stood beside him, a drawn sword in her hand.

He called her his 'angel' and - once the campaign had started - 'my 'listed soldier'. He'd had a rival for her affections and felt insecure about this even after Margaret married him. Older men laughed at him and called him

lovesick. Perhaps it was to reassure her young husband that she stayed at his side throughout the campaign, even going along on the march into England and sharing the rigours of that journey, as well as the demoralising and depressing retreat from Derby through the December snows.

Lady Ogilvy travelled with another Margaret. Mrs Murray of Broughton, the beautiful young wife of the Prince's secretary, had been born Margaret Ferguson. The Woodhouselee manuscript, an account of events in Edinburgh during the Jacobite army's occupation of the city, is thought to have been written by Patrick Crichton, laird of Woodhouselee and also an ironmonger and saddler in the Canongate. The narrative describes Mrs Murray as a strong Jacobite who, as the writer puts it, 'is gone into the spirit of the gang'. He goes on to detail her direct involvement in the seizing of horses and money for the Jacobite army.

The 18th century was an age of atrocious spelling. That contained within the Woodhouselee manuscript is nothing short of diabolical. Regaling us with descriptions of the Jacobite 'hillskippers, scownderalls and poltrowns,' the author goes on to describe Mrs Murray's costume when she left Edinburgh with her husband and the Highland army on the advance into England. The beautiful Margaret Murray was armed. She carried a brace of pistols fastened to her side-saddle and wore a fur trimmed outfit, made up specially to match the uniform of the Jacobite hussars, of whom her husband was the titular colonel. Her hat was 'distingwished with a white plumoshe fether'. Don't you just wish you could have seen her?

Although many of the Jacobite foot soldiers were accompanied by their wives and, sometimes, children, no other Jacobite ladies chose to march into battle with their men like Mrs Murray of Broughton and Lady Ogilvy. This most emphatically does not mean that they took a back seat. Quite the reverse. Many Scotswomen had a strong