
These two volumes, published by the Scottish Cultural Press of Aberdeen in commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the “45”, are designed to honour, study and remember the legacy of that famous rising, which did so much to change the structure of Highland society and the families who lived there, as well as Scotland’s place in the United Kingdom. The two books are also very different in purpose; Lenman’s is a re-publication of his 1984 study with a new preface, while the other is a collection of short pieces by members of the 1745 Association.

Bruce Lenman is well known to readers of the journal as one of the most eminent scholars of 17th and 18th century Scotland. As such, his book deserves to be republished in paperback form as it is far more comprehensive than the title might suggest. As he himself laments in his new preface, there has been little continued study of the 18th century Jacobite clans apart from his own *The Jacobite Risings in Britain 1689-1746*, but his study of the rise and fall of the Camerons and Frasers of the Great Glen from Cromwell’s time to the American Revolution, provides a superb framework for examining the futile efforts to preserve Gaelic clan hegemony against the steady power of the Williamite and later Hanoverian English, and from 1707, the British state. He begins his study with an examination of the geography of the Great Glen and its influence on clan and religious life that helped give rise to Jacobitism after 1689. The book’s primary focus, however, is upon the repeated attempts to subdue the Highlands beginning with William III and the effective decline of centralized government in the region that was only fitfully restored in the
18th century. Although the book’s central chapters are devoted to the political machinations of the two leading clans, but especially Simon Fraser, Lord Lovat and his descendants, it nevertheless provides a wider study of the alternating needs to cooperate but also to resist the military and civil government occupation of the highlands, especially after 1715.

The high point (or low, depending on one’s perspective) for the leading protagonists is the Rising of 1745, which is not examined in detail on its own, but rather as it affected the fortunes of the families of the Great Glen. As is well known, the vengeance of the Hanoverians that followed the suppression of the “45” was infamous, and led to the execution of Lovat. What is less generally acknowledged is the route followed to restitution after 1745, through the use of Highland regiments by the British Army in the Seven Years’ War and in the War of American Independence. In both cases, the need to reinforce overstretched regiments in North America led to recruitment in the depressed Highlands, which like concurrent attempts to recruit among Native Americans and in the German states was intended to make up for a notable unwillingness to fight among the larger British populace. As such, although many Highlanders sought and achieved a new life across the Atlantic, they nevertheless tended to remain Loyalist during the American Revolution, despite their resistance to the crown only 30 years earlier. As in so many other poorer or defeated areas, the army became the key economic support of the Highlands in the late 18th century, and ironically provided the clearest point of reconciliation, with the defeated clan leaders now taking their followers into such famous regiments as the Black Watch and the Cameron Highlanders.

A Jacobite Anthology is a collection of short articles and notes from the 1745 Association’s quarterly periodical The Jacobite, and follows the events of 1745 through various character sketches, anecdotes, descriptions of weapons and standards and other matters of interest supplied by the Association’s members.
It is evident that the historical nature of the Association is uppermost and it no longer maintains the fiction of acknowledging the Jacobite claimant (the current incumbent also claiming the defunct crown of Bavaria). The final piece of the collection is Victoria Thorpe’s “In Remembrance of Dr. Archibald Cameron”, the last Jacobite martyr executed in 1753. (p. 95) In 1993 a plaque was placed in the Queen’s Chapel of the Savoy in commemoration of Cameron’s death, with the permission of the Duchy of Lancaster which administers the Chapel. As the Duke of Lancaster is none other than Her Majesty the Queen, it is perhaps a fitting symbol of reconciliation. The collection of approximately 60 short pieces and articles will be of great interest to anyone who would like more information on the people, events and things surrounding the “45”, often written with a humorous touch.

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