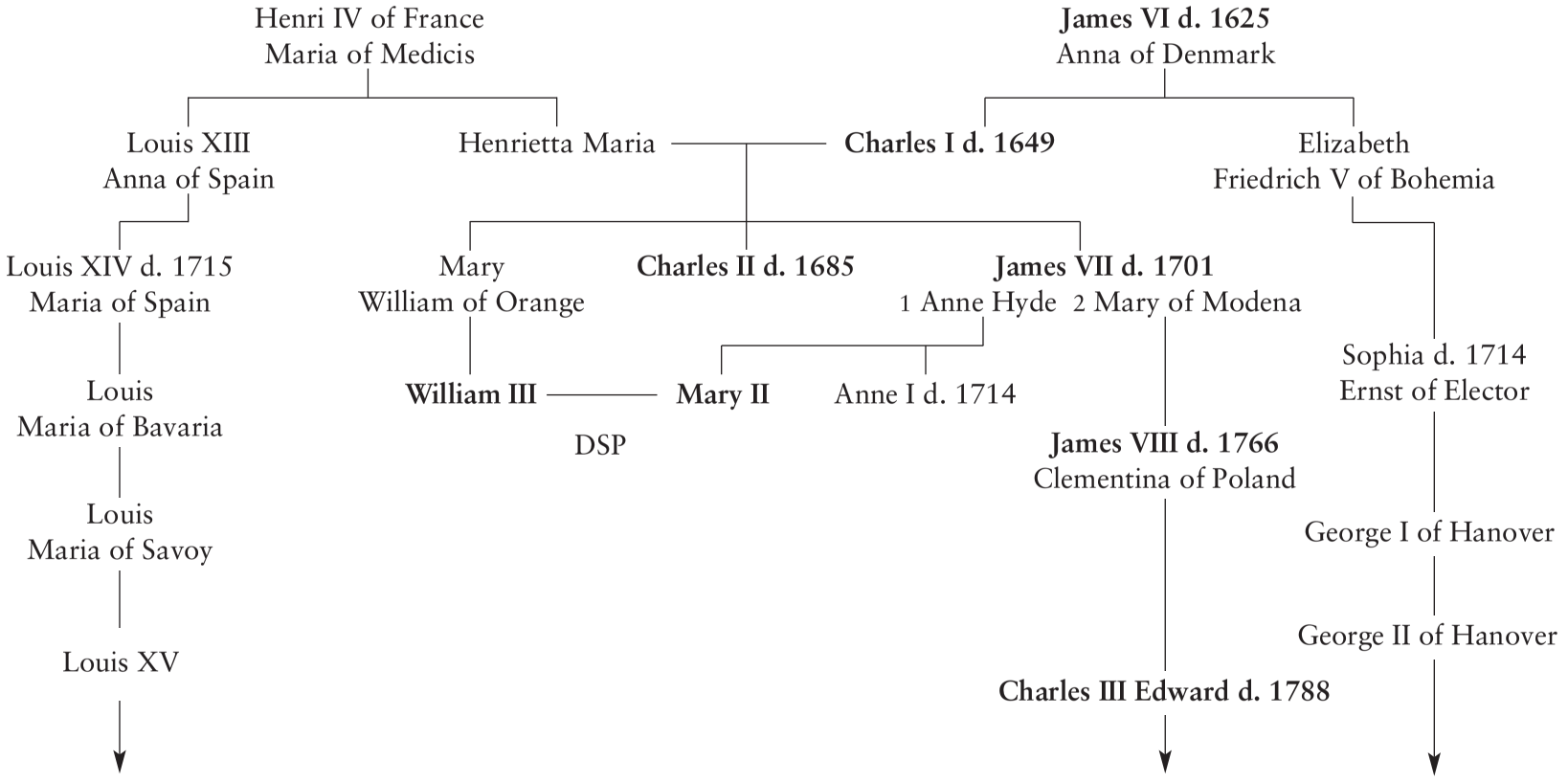
A battle, no matter how short a fight it might have been, can put a small town on the map forever. That, I think, was how everyone felt in September 1995, when we celebrated the 250th anniversary of the Battle of Prestonpans. It was a battle that had been a turning point in the Jacobite attempt to restore both the Stewarts[1] on the throne and the sovereignty of Scotland within Europe. Also, it was the first battle that the Jacobites had won since the demise of King James VII of the Scots[2] in 1688.

When I was asked by Prestoungrange to write this account of the battle, it very quickly became clear to me that, in view of the fact that the battle only lasted about seven minutes, this would be no easy task. I have therefore defined the structure of this analysis in order to examine *why* the Battle of Prestonpans took place at all. It is always difficult, even at the best of times, to get to the bottom of historical events that bring about the end of an era, so its seems appropriate to start from the beginning and explain why our ancestors came to fight upon the battlefield of Prestonpans in the first place.

1. Betrayal by the Anglican Church

We have to bear in mind that history, more often than not, is written by the conquerors, usually to keep those conquered firmly under their thumbs. In order to achieve this, an alternative course of history is then taught and, as the saying goes, 'tell them often enough and they will believe'. The same propagandist approach to history applies to the reasons why James VII of the Scots was betrayed by the Church of England, giving rise to Jacobitism. When James succeeded his brother Charles II in February 1685 the Church of England was in a quandary. Born an Anglican in St James' Palace on October 14th 1633, James converted to the Catholic Church in 1669 having reasoned that the Church of England had been created for the wrong reasons. His first wife, Anne, converted a year later. So, for some sixteen years before becoming king, James had worshipped in the old faith. But how could the Supreme Governor of the Church of England, the head spiritual of the church created by Queen Elizabeth I, be also a Roman Catholic?


Henri IV of France
Maria of Medicis
James VI d. 1625
Anna of Denmark
Louis XIII
Anna of Spain
Henrietta Maria
Charles I d. 1649
Elizabeth
Friedrich V of Bohemia
Louis XIV d. 1715
Maria of Spain
Mary
William of Orange
Charles II d. 1685
James VII d. 1701
1 Anne Hyde
2 Mary of Modena
Sophia d. 1714
Ernst of Elector
Louis
Maria of Bavaria
William III
Mary II
Anne I d. 1714
DSP
James VIII d. 1766
Clementina of Poland
Louis
Maria of Savoy
George I of Hanover
George II of Hanover
Louis XV
Charles III Edward d. 1788

Although the Anglican bishops saw James' declaration as a contradiction in terms, James conceived of no religious problems with his situation: as a private individual, he believed in Catholicism, as a king, he upheld the right of the Church of England as the State Church. However, James was unlike any other monarchs of his time. He had faced civil strife under Cromwell, had lived and worked abroad and had met enlightened individuals from many walks of life. They, and James, saw no sense in Protestant versus Catholic dogma and James worked with them all as equals, whether they were French Catholics, Huguenots or Dutch Protestants.

When he came to the throne and was anointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, James received the Oath of Allegiance from all the bishops and peers, for himself and his heir. All of them felt quite safe with the fact that his heir at that time was his Anglican daughter Mary, wife of William of Orange. As long as James' second wife and queen, Mary Beatrix of Modena, produced no son, James' crown was secured. But it is, of course, the duty of kings to produce male heirs and in 1688 the happy event took place when the Duke of Rothesay, Prince James Francis Edward Stewart, Prince of Wales, was born in London. The Church of England's worst fear had come to pass. A Catholic succession was assured. Would England see itself reverting to the clutches of the Papacy and, if so, how would they fare under the yoke of Rome?

2. William of Orange as the Alternative

There was, needless to say, another factor in play at the time. Church and politics usually went hand in hand and James' main problem was not so much his religious beliefs but rather the conflict between his cousin Louis XIV of France and his son-in-law, William in the Netherlands. It was all the more irritating in that all the parties concerned were closely related to one another as the small family tree opposite shows.

The 1680s had seen both Louis XIV and William of Orange at loggerheads over territorial rights and the supremacy of the sea. At that time Holland was supreme in all things naval. Britain had been at war with Holland for many years, since the Restoration of 1660, but the war was costly and in 1677 Britain decided to conclude a treaty with the Dutch. To seal the treaty, in the same year, James' eldest daughter Princess

Mary was married to her cousin William of Orange. After succeeding as king, James also decided that Britain would remain neutral in the conflict between the French and the Dutch. While Louis was happy at this turn of events, William was furious: without British support the Netherlands would soon lose the war to the French foe and lose the trading supremacy it had held for so long. William needed British troops to fight for him against Louis XIV. From the day James succeeded to the throne of his ancestors, William was resolved to topple him from the royal steps and take the kingdom over himself. So William, a Dutch Protestant, turned to the one man who could turn the wheel of political fortune in his favour – Pope Innocent XI, head of the Roman Catholic Church.

This was not as surprising as it may seem. Holland was a member of the Holy Roman Empire and the spiritual head of that empire was, of course, the Pope. In order to topple a Roman Catholic king from his perch William needed two things from the head of the Roman Catholic Church: the first was his permission to do so and the second was the Pope's decree that Roman catholic mercenaries had the right to fight in the Dutch Protestant invading army. In the event, recent evidence[3] and press reports[4] suggest that Innocent XI did even better by giving William the money to be used for payment to the Catholic mercenaries who made up no less than two thirds of William's invading army in 1688. There were two reasons for Pope Innocent XI taking a stand against King James VII. Firstly, the French king Louis XIV was planning the creation of a Gallic Church of France, catholic in essence, but free and independent of Rome. Secondly, James VII was intent on giving British Jews, Quakers and Catholics the right to worship according to their conscience. While the Pope approved the removal of worshipping constraints on British Roman Catholics, he did not approve of Jews and Quakers enjoying the same rights. While it would have been difficult for the Papacy to remove the crown from the King of France, James of the Scots – particularly as King of England – was still in a precarious position and so the hammer blow fell on his head. By January 1689, having been deserted by most of his generals, James had to leave Britain. He landed in France where he was welcomed by King Louis XIV. The Palace of Saint Germain-en-Laye was made over to James and the British court in exile.

James VII had not, of course, abdicated and much of the English Parliament was anxious for his return, for they had

not in fact offered the crown to William of Orange. A vote was taken and when the result was in favour of James, William became so incensed that he had the Houses of Parliament surrounded and word sent that he required a second vote to take place declaring that the 'vacant crown' of England was offered to him and his wife as joint rulers. It was made clear that the mercenary troops would be let loose on them if the vote did not favour William's wishes. Parliament did as William demanded. James, of course, rejected the notion of an elected monarch and stated the vote to be unconstitutional. He immediately set out to regain his inheritance through an Irish campaign with the financial backing of France.

3. Boyne and the Union

James VII fought and lost the Battle of the Boyne in 1690 and in 1701, just before James' death in Paris, the English Parliament passed the *Act of Succession* whereby 'no Catholic could succeed to the crown of St. Edward'. England and Scotland, however, had separate parliaments and thus the English Act could not be imposed upon the Scots. In fact, in 1703 the Scots Parliament passed the *Act of Security* keeping the succession in Scotland separate to that of England, though always within the royal line. The Scots Parliament ratified this Act every year until 1706 but, in 1707 Scotland saw herself stripped of her rightful sovereignty through the Treaty of Union. Her Parliament, the Three Estaites, was dissolved on May 1st 1707, at a cost of 12,000 English Pounds Sterling in gold – the money used to bribe the many Scottish Barons (which included Prestoungrange), Burgesses and Peers who voted in favour of the Union. In today's terms, this amounts to a paltry £750,000. The list of those who voted in favour of Union demonstrates that most of them were Presbyterians and, to quote Professor James Garden's speech in the new church of Aberdeen:

> "… they allowed and tamely permitted the nation basely and shamefully to be sold and enslaved contrary to the Express Remonstrances of most part of the Kingdom, under the specious name and pretence of an Union with England."[5]

He was right: the whole of Scotland was inflamed by the fact that a stroke of a pen had removed the nation's sovereignty.

Riots flared everywhere and the Act of the Union, in leaflet form, was burned by the majority of the Scottish people.

With the Act of Union, Jacobitism was turned from Scots patriotism into Scots nationalism. Lockhart of Lee wrote to King James VIII that "as the aversion to the Union dayly encreases, that is the handle by which Scotsmen will be raised to make a general and zealous appearance … as I am fully persuaded the better part of the English are far from thinking the Union beneficial to either Countrey. I cannot but see that it is expedient for the King to gratify his friends in Scotland".[6] James, in turn, replied that he would "… relieve our Subjects of Scotland from the hardships they groan under on account of the late unhappy Union and to restore the Kingdom to its ancient free and independent state … We hope … to see our just Rights, and those of the Church and People of Scotland, once more settled in a free and independent Scots Parliament on their Ancient Foundation".[7]

With Westminster then deciding to levy high malt tax and duty on the Scots, Jacobitism became ever more the political faction to follow since it advocated that it should only pay the hated tax and duty on the old Scots footing. The Union was seen by many as far too expensive to people north of the border – even the Cameronians were starting to think of catholic King James as a better bet both for themselves and the financial well-being of the people of Scotland.

4. 1708, 1715 and 1718

In 1708, James VIII, Francis Edward, made his way to Scotland but was forced back to France by the English fleet before he could set foot on his ancestral kingdom. Following the succession of George I of Hanover, nicknamed 'The wee, wee German Lairdie' by the Scots, he came back in 1715 with the help of the Earl of Mar who unfurled the King's banner at Braemar, then a hotbed of pro-Stewart sympathisers. The Battle of Sherrifmuir, led by Mar, was one where both armed forces claimed victory. The Highlanders however, instead of staying put after the battle, made their way home with their booty and so the field was reclaimed by the Hanoverian forces soon afterwards. James was to be crowned at Scone but, before the ceremony could begin, the Duke of Argyll's pro-Hanoverian forces obliged him to make another escape back to France. A fourth attempt, this time with Spanish backing, took place in

1718 but failed due to adverse weather conditions which scattered the Spanish Armada at Cape Finisterre. The star of the Stewarts was at its lowest ebb and a restoration nowhere in sight.

With the birth of Prince Charles Edward in 1720, Scots aspirations were once more on the increase. Charles was brought up by mainly Scots and Irish people. His first tutor was chevalier Michael Andrew Ramsay, a man committed to the cause of Scottish freemasonry and an great enthusiast of all things Templar. As Charles' tutor he had a profound effect on Charles' way of thinking. Ramsay's intent was to create the first democratic king in the history of Europe. He resolved to restore Charles as king and set out to do this by making sure that Freemasonry would help achieve this. Ramsay created a secret service within Scottish and European Freemasonry that lasted well into the 19th century. In 1732 Charles Edward's training as a future 'crowned democrat' began when he joined the Jacobite study Lodge of Tobosco in Rome, which trained teenagers in the intricacies of Scottish Freemasonry. By 1743, the various members belonging to Charles' Lodge in Rome were travelling extensively, visiting Lodges all over Scotland. Murray, Charles' secretary, was high within the Scottish hierarchy and helped pave the way to Masonic support.

5. The Opportunity Presents Itself in 1745

The summer of 1745 saw England at its lowest military ebb. The Hon. Henry Pelham, third Prime Minister of Great Britain, wrote to the Duke of Argyll that 'I never was in so much apprehension as I am a present … the loss of all Flanders, and that of Ostend (which I am afraid must soon be expected), will, we apprehend, from the great superiority of the French in Flanders, be soon followed by some embarkation from Ostend, or Dunkirk, or both. And there is reason to believe that the French and Spanish ships which are now in the western ports of France, and in the Bay of Biscay, (amounting to between twenty and thirty, twenty of which are of the line), may be intended to support the embarkation either by coming up the Channel, where at present we have not a squadron sufficient to oppose them, or (as I find is apprehended by some), by coming up north, about Scotland to Ostend. Seven French men-o'-war sailed from Brest about five weeks ago. It is thought possible they may be somewhere lying to the

westward to wait there till Ostend shall be in the hands of the French, and then proceed round Scotland thither. We are getting our ships ready, and I hope we shall soon have a tolerable squadron in the Channel. But if the French should come north about, they might surprise us. We are sending transports for 10,000 men to Campveer and Flushing, in order to bring part of our army from Flanders, if it should be necessary for the defence of this Kingdom'.[8]

In July 1745 Charles landed in Scotland. The Prince had come home to reclaim his grandfather's birthright. After his standard was unfolded in Glenfinnan on August 19th clan after clan joined him, carrying broadswords bearing the legend 'Prosperity to Scotland and no union'. They marched upon the capital city of Edinburgh, Athens of the North. Even then General Cope was trying to chase him away having travelled by ship to Dundee in an attempt to intercept the Prince's army before it became too big to deal with. Cope had not been keen to do this for it left Edinburgh undefended. Cope, of course, was right. To fight in a territory unknown to you is madness and the clans were excellent fighters in the manner we know today as 'guerilla warfare'. The hit and run tactic is one that no army can defeat, particularly when the geography of the land was so unlike that of the south of England. Moreover, they knew how to evade Cope's troops. The fact that Captain Switenham of Guise's regiment, together with his troops, had been taken prisoner by MacDonald of Keppoch's people five days before the raising of Charles Edward's standard did not help Cope either.

How had this twenty-five year old puppy, accompanied by only eight people (though history tends to mention only six), suddenly become so popular and so easily become a leader of the most disreputable men in Scotland? Courtesy and charisma were the keys by which Charles won their support. A contemporary report from one who was not a Jacobite sympathiser describes Charles Edward as being 'tall and handsome, with brown eyes and fair complexion, he wore a short tartan coat without a plaid, a blue bonnet and on his breast the star of the Order of St Andrew'.[9] Another stated Charles to be a 'goodlie person', 'physically fit and an excellent horseman', 'has the gift of projecting an aura of royalty and command', 'looked every inch a Prince with the manner of a very distinguished and well-bred person'.[10] That he should have appealed to so many thousands of people is not surprising, particularly if one adds the extra card of his willingness to tackle the Gaelic language.

Prince Charles Edward (from a contemporary engraving)

There is another aspect of the '45 that is hardly ever dealt with: the fact that Charles' army was composed of even numbers of Catholics, Presbyterians and Episcopalians. Charles' emphasis during his opening speech at Glenfinnan was Scotland's god-given right to sovereignty, to freedom, civil rights and liberties. No Prince ever spoke like this before. The hated union with England was henceforth declared null and

void. People were fighting for two things. First, for the restoration of Scotland's ancient rights and secondly for the restoration of the Stewarts, because the first could only happen if the second took place. One Covenanter Jacobite sympathiser, following the meeting at Edinburgh's Mercat Cross in 1707 whereby Queen Anne was deposed and her half brother, catholic James, proclaimed king, had declared 'No matter how much a Catholic tyrant he might grow to be, at least the ancient constitution and rights of our nation shall be preserved'.[11] The same thinking prevailed when Charles Edward set foot in Scotland some thirty-eight years later.

6. Lord Lyon Proclaims James VIII King of the Scots

Edinburgh was taken practically without the Jacobites firing a shot. The castle, then in Hanoverian hands, was not taken. This was a mistake. It had hardly any powder to fire its cannon, something Charles was unaware of, and the original plates once used to print our ancient Scottish notes were within the walls of Edinburgh's fortress. Moreover, the men manning the walls were elderly and few. With hindsight, Charles should have taken the castle and started to print cash, Scottish cash, straight away. The French would have recognised our ancient currency and this would have put both the Bank of England and the Hanoverian king in a quandary. One move which did terrify Prime Minister Henry Pelham was when the Lord Lyon, King of Arms, together with his Poursuivants at the Mercat Cross in the capital city of Edinburgh, proclaimed Charles' father 'King James VIII of the Scots' and Charles to be his rightful and lawful 'Regent' till the king could return home.

By this time, George II was having difficulties paying the troops who were fighting the French and was constantly requesting the British Parliament to pay the wages of his Hanoverian and Hessian soldiers. It was felt by many in London's political circles that the Hanoverian price was a hard one to pay. Britain, it was felt, was fast becoming Hanover's financial backer in a war that few perceived to be in England's interests. As for Scotland, few Scots were keen to enlist in the British Army. The idea of death on foreign soil was not a popular one. Moreover, Scots would have found themselves