

# *Reminiscences of a Jacobite*

THE  
UNTOLD STORY  
*of the*  
RISING OF 1745

MICHAEL NEVIN

*Reminiscences of a Jacobite* is published to mark the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth, on December 31<sup>st</sup> 1720, of one of the most controversial figures in British history, Prince Charles Edward Stuart. His tri-centenary is an appropriate moment to reassess his life, character and career, and to consider whether the conventional view of him as a reckless and irresponsible adventurer who launched a campaign that was doomed to fail is entirely fair.

In 2002, the author successfully bid for a hand-written letter and memorandum by Prince Charles which had lain forgotten in a French archive for nearly three hundred years. The story that emerges from the first-hand testimony of the Prince and his leading supporters is far more complex than suggested by conventional histories of the time, and reveal the Prince as a far more charismatic and courageous figure than portrayed in popular fiction.

Drawing extensively on previously unpublished research and generously illustrated with thirty colour images, the *Reminiscences* show that, far from abandoning Scotland after Culloden, the Prince did not finally give up his dream of a Stuart Restoration until the failure of the Elibank Plot in 1752.

This book tells the story of the Rising of 1745–46, its genesis and consequences. It looks at the motivations of the leading players, analyses how the campaign was financed, examines crucial but neglected battles of the Jacobite Wars and sheds new light on the mystery of what led to Bonnie Prince Charlie's psychological disintegration after 1752, marking the final end of the Jacobite era, when the drumbeat of war sounded for the last time on the island of Great Britain, leaving an echo that resonates to this day.

## ***Reminiscences of a Jacobite: Synopsis***

*Reminiscences of a Jacobite* comprises three sections, each of six chapters. The first section considers the underlying cause of the Rising of 1745, dating back to 1689, the year that James VII and II was deposed by his son-in-law William of Orange. One person who apparently emerged victorious from this struggle was the last Stuart monarch, Queen Anne. Yet her political triumph was only achieved at great personal cost, destroying her own dynasty and denying her half-brother, James Francis Edward Stuart, the succession. James' attempt to win back the throne resulted in yet more conflict, including the neglected Battle of Glenshiel in 1719, analysed in the book's fifth chapter.

The second section covers the Rising of 1745, drawing on the Prince's own account of the Rising; his public declarations and proclamations during the campaign; his private conversations with his closest allies; his appearance at that time, as represented in contemporary portraits reproduced in the book's colour plates; contemporary poems and songs, including *The Day of Culloden*; and the private accounts of his supporters, including Mrs Anne Prichard. All these sources reveal a man who believed, as he reflected on his time in Great Britain, that Culloden marked, not the end of his hopes, but merely a temporary setback that could soon be reversed. They also reveal that, so far from being the weak and reckless adventurer of Hanoverian propaganda, the Prince was a charismatic commander-in-chief with a clear and credible strategy, and it was these characteristics that convinced intelligent and experienced men as varied as Lord George Murray, the Duke of Perth, Col O'Sullivan, Lochiel and other clan leaders to risk everything they had by supporting his cause.

The final part of the book looks at the aftermath of the Rising, telling the story of the Prince's own remarkable escape after Culloden. Meanwhile, the Jacobite Lords Balmerino, Kilmarnock and Lovat faced their fate on the scaffold at Tower Hill with considerable courage, and the book recalls their thoughts as they faced their imminent mortality. The thoughts of the Prince himself on his defeat are captured in the Gaelic narrative poem, *The Day of Culloden*, composed by his faithful partisan John Roy Stuart. The final blow to his hopes came with the failure of the Elibank Plot in 1752 and a cathartic event that precipitated the Prince's own decline into alcoholism and post-traumatic stress disorder.





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Monsieur Mon Frere et Cousin



J'ai eu l'honneur d'écrire à Vo  
avant mon départ de Fontainebo  
la liberté de vous représenter à cette heure  
que je viens d'achever un petit mémoire de  
mes affaires, et que je souhaite  
l'honneur de le remettre à s  
main propre. Le plutôt se  
j'attendrai avec impatience  
le jour et la manière que  
pos de m'accorder ce plaisir là. Si Votre Majesté  
trouve bon que je m'en aille en cachette, je  
pourrois bien le faire avec une personne  
et me rendre à l'endroit quelle aura la bon  
té de me marquer, à l'Insu de toute le  
Monde. Comme je me flatte d'avoir  
l'amitié d'un si grand Roi, je ne veux  
rien faire sans prendre la liberté de  
demander son avis, en tout et partout.  
J'ay l'honneur d'être,



Monsieur Mon Frere et Cousin  
Monsieur Mon Frere et Cousin  
Charles P.

A Chichy Le 5.  
Novembre, 1746.



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