

Loch nan Uamh

by
Norman H. MacDonald

It is generally agreed that the Prince and his party arrived in Loch nan Uamh – The Loch of the Caves, from Eriskay, on 25 July 1745. He and his companions remained in the neighbourhood of Borrodale, either on shore, or on board ship until 10 August. On the day of their arrival, they were visited by Ranald MacDonald, Younger of Clanranald, Alexander MacDonald of Glenaladale and several other prominent members of the Clanranald, including Donald MacDonald of Kinlochmoidart with several of his brothers and the author of the anonymous account in the Lockhart Papers, almost certainly identified as the bard Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair. It is presumably on this occasion that the incident described by John Home, in his *History of the Rebellion in the Year 1745* is supposed to have occurred in which he states that a younger brother of Kinlochmoidart, named Ranald, on hearing that his chief (i.e. Young Clanranald) and his brother (i.e. Donald of Kinlochmoidart) refused to take up arms with their prince, in response to Charles' appeal to them to assist him, replied "I will, I will, ... though no other man in the Highlands should draw a sword, I am ready to die for you" to which utterance "the two MacDonalds declared that they also would join." This incident is not referred to in any of the eye-witness accounts of the Prince's first meeting with the principal men of Clanranald it may be said that Kinlochmoidart's brother, Ranald, who had a tack of Daliburgh, South Uist, in 1730 from Clanranald could hardly have been a young man in 1745. It is also interesting to note that Borrodale's son Ranald, who served as a lieutenant in the Clanranald Regiment, in an interview with Bishop Forbes on 13 October 1748 stated that "he himself was the first man that went on board the frigate (i.e. the *Du Teillay*) in which the Prince was when he and his few attendants first came upon the coast near Borrodale." (*The Lyon in Mourning*, II, p.198). Could this have been the Ranald to whom Home refers rather than Kinlochmoidart's brother? He was certainly a young man in 1745.

The day following the landing, Kinlochmoidart was sent south to summon John Murray of Broughton, the Duke of Perth and Lochiel, while Young Clanranald and Kinlochmoidart's brother, Allan were despatched to Skye to summon Sir Alexander MacDonald of Sleat and Norman MacLeod of Dunvegan, and Glenaladale was instructed to assemble Clanranald's men

as a guard for the Prince. Donald MacDonell of Scotus, on behalf of Glengarry, Alexander MacDonell of Keppoch, Alexander MacDonald of Glencoe and Bishop Hugh MacDonald, Morar's brother also visited the Prince. All, including those who had accompanied him from France, entreated Charles to return but he was determined to proceed with the attempt. Young Clanranald having returned from Skye with the refusals of Alexander MacDonald and MacLeod to join was also reluctant to continue but Charles' absolute refusal to change his mind persuaded him to yield and raise his clan. The die was therefore cast and there was no turning back. Lochiel sent his brother, Dr Archibald Cameron, to urge the Prince to return to France, in consequence of which Charles sent Donald Yr of Scotus to Achnacarry "to persuade Lochiel to do his duty." According to Home's History, Lochiel then set off to meet the Prince at Borrodale and inform him of his decision not to rise, but on the way he called in on his brother John at Fassfern when the latter advised him not to see Charles, for "if this Prince once sets his eyes upon you he will make you do whatever he pleases." It is probable that Home obtained much of his information regarding the events at this time from Cameron sources long after their occurrence. Bishop Hugh MacDonald, Borrodale's brother, informed Bishop Robert Forbes in 1750 (The Lyon in Mourning, III, p.52) that when Dr Archibald Cameron informed the Prince that Lochiel would not join, Charles sent Young Scotus to "endeavour to persuade Lochiel to do his duty" and that he succeeded so well that he brought Lochiel along with him to Borrodale." Bishop Hugh MacDonald further states that when he saw the Prince was determined to proceed "he importuned" Young Clanranald to "raise as many men as might be sufficient to guard the Prince's person" as Sir Alexander MacDonald and the Laird of MacLeod had endeavoured to procure a promise from him not to join and that "they prevented so far as to make him backward in joining." The Bishop and others, however, persuaded him" to consider the urgency of the case, and to consult the safety of the Prince's person, to which he listened and immediately raised his following on the continent" (Ibid.) Bishop Robert Forbes at a meeting with Alasdair Ruadh MacDonell, Yr of Glengarry, in 1752 (The Lyon in Mourning, III, pp. 120-1), referred to having "oftener than once" heard the Viscountess Dowager of Strathallan tell that Lochiel junior (I.e. The Gentle Lochiel) had refused to raise a man, or make any appearance until the Prince should give him security for the full value of his estate in the event of the attempt proving abortive. Young Glengarry answered that it was fact and that the Prince had told him as much (after his return to France) assigning this as the weighty reason why he (The prince) had provided Young Lochiel, preferably to all others, with his colonelcy of a regiment> Young Glengarry further stated that Lochiel had also insisted that before he would join in the attempt, Glengarry should undertake to raise his clan and join the Prince, which he "did actually give...under his hand that

his clan should rise...Then, indeed, young Lochiel was grateful in all his demands, and did instantly raise his clan.”

Arrangements were then made to raise the Standard of King James VIII at Glenfinnan on Monday 19 August 1745. On 04 August, the Du Teillay having discharged its stores and armaments, left Loch nan Uamh and went privateering on the west coast while the Prince took up his quarters at Borrodale House from which he sent messengers and letters to friends and adherents throughout the land.

On 11 August, the Prince and his party, with the artillery and baggage, set out for Kinlochmoidart House.

Charles was again at Borrodale after the defeat at Culloden and with Donald MacLeod as pilot and a boat crew of mainly MacDonalds left Loch nan Uamh for the Outer Hebrides, on 26 April 1746 having, according to Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair, obtained a set of Highland clothes from Lady Borrodale, although this appears to be contradicted by O’Sullivan who was present.

The Prince’s final visit to Borrodale was on 19 September 1746, when he and a large number of his followers embarked on board the two ships that were to carry them to France. Anchor was weighed shortly after midnight.

A cairn was erected by the then Forty-Five Association in 1956 at the traditional spot on the shore of Loch nan Uamh from which the Prince embarked for France on 20 September 1746.