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The First News that reached Edinburgh of the Landing of Prince Charles, 1745

THE narratives which are told of the landing of Prince Charles in Scotland, although written by men who were present at the time, are so full of discrepancies that from them it has been difficult to determine the exact date of his arrival at Arisaig. The discrepancies vary from July 18 to July 26. Since the publication by the Duc de la Trémoille and Mr. Hussey Walsh of the log of the ship *Dutillet* (generally called in Scots narratives the *Doutelle*) which brought the Prince from France, all difficulties are removed, and what is more, a daily account is given of the events which happened in the busy fortnight during which the ship remained in the waters between Arisaig and Moidart.¹

The *Dutillet* arrived in Lochnanuagh on Thursday, July 25, and anchored off [Borradale](#) in Arisaig. The Prince went on shore that day but apparently returned on board ship the same evening. The party gave out that they were smugglers. The Prince himself was dressed as an ecclesiastic, and this disguise was kept up for some time.

On Friday and Saturday several guests (*quelques seigneurs du pays*) came on board. One of these visitors was

¹ *Une Famille Royaliste, française et irlandaise*: Nantes 1902. There is an English translation of the volume by the late Miss Murray Macgregor: Edinburgh 1904. The discrepancies of dates given in the Scottish narratives are freely analysed in a long note in the *Itinerary of Prince Charles*, p. 2, to which the reader is referred. The publication of the log of the *Dutillet* enables me to make a correction of two dates in the *Itinerary*, which I take this opportunity of making here: (1) The final landing of the Prince in Arisaig occurred on August 5th (not August 4th); (2) The ship finally left Lochnanuagh on the morning of August 8th (not the 4th).

Young Clanranald, who was at once sent off to Skye to summon Sir Alexander Macdonald of Sleat and Macleod of Dunvegan 'to do their duty.'

On Monday July 29) the ship crossed the loch and lay at the [entrance of Loch Aylort](#), a branch of Lochnanuagh, by the shores of which lay the district of Moidart. The ship was anchored near the shore, and on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday (29th to 31st) the party landed stores, arms and ammunition with great secrecy, beginning work at 10 p.m. and finishing at 3 in the morning.

Meantime Young Clanranald returned from his visit to Skye thoroughly disheartened, for Macdonald and Macleod refused to join although hitherto reputed ardent Jacobites. Clanranald strongly advised the abandonment of the expedition, and Charles, driven nearly to despair, turned to Young Ranald Macdonald (brother of the laird of Kinlochmoidart) and asked 'Will you not assist me?' 'I will, I will,' he exclaimed, 'though no other man in the highlands should draw a sword I am ready to die for you.'² This enthusiasm was infectious; Clanranald with the other Macdonalds present at once agreed to go on, and Clanranald went to raise his clan. Lochiel too visited the Prince on board ship, and although at first he advised Charles to return, his reluctance was overcome, and he also agreed to rise. These accessions encouraged the Prince, and his despair turned to hope. From Loch Aylort he wrote a letter to his father in fairly good spirits telling of his arrival and of his expectations; but he adds, 'the French Court must now necessarily take off the mask or have an eternal shame on them.' This letter is dated Sunday, August 4. It is preserved in the Stuart Papers at Windsor and is printed in full by Lord Mahon in his *History*.³ Two days later, after he had landed Charles wrote a letter to the King of France which was enclosed to D'Argenson, the French Minister of War, in a letter written by Sir Thomas Sheridan who had accompanied the Prince from France. These letters are preserved in the Archives of the French Government, and by their permission they are reproduced here.

² Home's *Hist. of the Rebellion*, chap. ii.

³ *Hist. of England*, app. of *Stuart Papers* to chap. xxvii.

LETTRE DU PRINCE CHARLES A LOUIS XV.

$\frac{6}{17}$ Aoust, 1745

MONSIEUR MON ONCLE,

J'eus l'honneur, il y a quelque tems, de donner avis à Votre Majesté de mon voyage. J'ai aujourd'hui celui de lui faire part de mon arrivée en ce pais-ci, où je trouve beaucoup de bonne volonté, et j'espère de me voir en peu de jours en état d'agir.

Il dépend uniquement de Votre Majesté de faire réussir mon entreprise, et il ne lui sera pas difficile, pour peu qu'elle veuille faire attention à *mes besoins*, et couronner par là la campagne glorieuse qu'elle vient de faire. Un *secours* qui ne coûteroit que peu à Votre Majesté me mettroit bientôt en état *d'entrer en Angleterre*, et m'obligeroit à une reconnaissance égale à l'attachement respectueux avec lequel je serai toujours,

Monsieur mon Oncle,

De Votre Majesté

le tres-affectionne Neveu,

CHARLES P.⁴

1 Le 6 Aoust v.s., 1745.

LETTRE DE SHERIDAN A D'ARGENSON.

DANS LA BAYE DE LOUGH AYLORT,

$\frac{4}{15}$ Aoust, 1745.

MONSIEUR,

Son Altesse Royale, en m'ordonnant de vous faire venir l'incluse pour Sa Majesté Très-Chrétienne, m'ordonne aussi de vous faire savoir qu'elle est enfin *arrivée en Ecosse*, où elle a trouvé *beaucoup d'amis* pour la recevoir, et qui ont promis *de vivre et de mourir avec elle*. C'est tout ce que l'on pouvoit espérer pour donner un commencement à l'affaire. Monseigneur le Prince de Galles se flatte que dans cette

⁴ This letter was printed in Mr. Fitzroy Bell's *Memorials of Murray of Broughton*, p.507.

situation, le Roi très-Chrétien ne l'abandonnera pas. Si un *corps de troupes nous venoit joindre en ce pais-ci*, il nous mettroit bientôt en état de *pénétrer en Angleterre*, qui n'a jamais été si dégarnie qu'elle l'est à présent. Nous aurons en même tems besoin d'argent, d'armes et de Munitions. S.A.R. vous prie, Monsieur, de prendre ses intérêts à cœur dans cette occasion, et de lui donner lieu de vous témoigner bientôt avec éclat les sentimens dans lesquels il se trouve à votre égard.

Le Chevalier Walsh, qui s'est chargé de vous faire venir cette lettre, vous pourra dire beaucoup de particularités qu'il ne vous sera pas inutile de savoir.

J'ai l'honneur d'être, avec toute sorte de respect,

Monsieur,

Votre très-humble et très-obéissant serviteur

SHERIDAN.

Dans la Baye de Lough Aylort,
le 4 Aoust, 1745. v.s.

On Monday (August 5) the Prince left the ship and landed at Borradale, taking up his quarters at the farmhouse of Angus Macdonald, a cadet of the Clanranald. It is interesting to read the note in the ship's log: 'Nous avons envoyé de quoi disner au prince qui n'avoit rien.'

Charles remained at Borradale until Sunday (August 11), when he moved to Kinlochmoidart, where he remained until the 17th. Two days later the standard was raised at Glenfinnan.

It seems extraordinary that with all this bustle going on, no news of the Prince's landing reached the military authorities at Edinburgh until the 8th of August, exactly a fortnight after he had anchored in Lochnanuagh; even more remarkable that the news did not reach the strong government garrison at Fort-william, not twenty-five miles from the head of Loch Aylort, until August 9. The means of ensuring this secrecy is told in the following letter written five years later by the minister of Ardnamurchan.

This letter belongs to Mr. R. Robertson-Shersby-Harvie of Brownlie in Carluke parish. It was among the papers of Mr.

William Harvie who succeeded to the estate of Brownlie in October 1760, on the death of his uncle the Rev. William Steel, who had been minister of the Lanarkshire parish of Dalserf from 1730 to 1760, and who owned the property of Waygateshaw in the same parish. There is no absolute proof that the letter was written to this minister, but there is very strong probability.

The writer, the Rev. Lauchlan Campbell, was minister of Ardnamurchan from 1737 to 1755, when he was translated to the parish of Craignish, where he remained until his death in 1763.

There seems no reason to doubt the authenticity of the letter, or the genuineness of the claim to priority of information made by the writer.

Edr. 21st. May. 1750.

R. D. Sir

In obedience to your desire to know how I came to be the first, who discovered the Pretenders landing, and gave the first notice of it to the friends of the Government, take the following short account. In the moneth of July 1745 all the people living on the North coast of Ardnamurchan saw a ship put in to Lochnanua in Arisaig where no man alive saw ship drop anchor before that time, some curious people went to know what that same ship might be, Such as went when they came to the place and Convers'd with their neighbours ask'd what might be aboard the ship, and what news. the answer that was made was, take up your hand and swear to Almighty God that you will not discover it, till it is proper, and I'll tell you news that will make your heart rejoyce. Their curiosity being wrought to a great pitch, they swore as they were desired, and when the whole secret was discovered to them, that there was their much wish'd for Prince (as they call'd him) and now was the time for them to assert their Liberty, and be rid of Usurpation and Presbytery, When these people returned home, and their neighbours asked the news of the ship, the answer, that it was a smuggling vessel with brandy, but that it was very dear, and that no man could buy of it. Some short time after they began to deny that there was any ship att all, that the vessel pass'd by. I observed at that time, that all my Jacobites were in high spirits, A short while after I was administiring the Lord's Supper, and I

observed a certain backwardness in many to communicate tho' they gave up their names before as Communicants; the Lords Day following I was preaching on the North side of the Countrey, and according to my course of lecturing I was explaining to them the 2nd Chapter of the first Ep. to Timothy,⁵ that doctrine was quite against their sentiments, and my congregation could hardly hear with decency. I observ'd a stir among them, I desired them to compose themselves, that I was to answer to God for the Doctrine I was delivering to them, and that they were to answer what entertainment they gave to it, and added, I do not think but you are ready to rebell, but beware you do not meet with Absalom's Fate; After dismissing the congregation, a gentleman comes to me and addresses me thus. Sir, you know I have a regard for you and your family, wherefore do not preach in yon stile again, else beware of the consequence. Be the consequence what it will, say I, I will not keep back any part of God's word from my people, for wo is unto me if I will. Well, Well said he you'll see what will become of it. I returned to my house that night and found there, one Anna Cameron, who was then a great Whig. I took a walk with her and asked what news, for you was yesterday, (said I,) in Kinbraes visiting your brother and sisters, I have no news says she, but you have, says I, I preached such a sermon today in Kilmory and the people were like to go mad, I can take my oath upon it that the Pretender is in my parish; She says can you take your oath upon it, according to my present conviction I can. God be thanked said she, that you can for I was under oath to tell nothing, till one could swear that he knew the Pretender was in Kinlochmoydert, and is he not then say I, indeed is he, says she, Was it in the ship that came to Arisaig said I, Yes says she, what number of people is with him say I, the answer six men and himself, but word is sent to all the Highland Chiefs about. What day of this month did he land, The seventeenth, said she; I thanked her, and told her that I would do her a good office if ever it lay in my way and made her very welcome in my house every time she pleased to *** with myself that I should write instantly to the

⁵ I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour (I. Tim. ii. 1, 2, 3).

Shirriff of the Shire, but alas I had not as much money as would bear the charges of an Express or go myself. I was then forced to make the discovery to one Donald Campbell of Achindown who was then Baillie of Ardnamurchan, and to an officer who was recruiting men for Loudon.⁶ ***

* that regiment was rais'd; Immediately Achindown sent express to the Shirriff of the shire, and he as soon as he received the information, sent it to the Duke of Argyle, who was then in Roseneath upon his way to Inveraray. The Duke how soon he received the information returned to Edr. and thence to London. For the truth of the Discovery I can appeal to the above Officer, and the informer, afterwards the Shirriff came to know of it, but no mention was made of my name above, How innumerable were the Difficulties I underwent afterwards. I was brought within the space of 24 hours of dissmissing family keeping, and guns cock'd to my breast, for praying for his majesty etc. etc. etc.

R. D. Sir yours, LAUCH: CAMPBELL.

Ardnamurchan is an enormous parish partly in Argyll and partly in Inverness-shire. The Argyll portion contains the districts of Ardnamurchan proper and Sunart, of which districts the inhabitants were Protestant. The Inverness districts were Moidart, Arisaig and South Morar, of which Clanranald was the chief and the inhabitants were Roman Catholic.

Though there was but one parish minister there were two churches in the parish, one at Kilchoan on the Sound of Mull, where the minister resided, and the other, about six miles distant, at Kilmory on the north coast of Ardnamurchan. According to the *Statistical Account* the minister held a service at Kilmory on alternate Sundays.

Comparison with known dates shows that Mr. Campbell's sermon at Kilmory, mentioned in his letter, must have been preached on Sunday, August 4th, and on this day the interview with Anna Cameron occurred. The date of the landing given in the letter is so manifestly impossible that it is either a slip of the pen in writing or a lapse of memory in

⁶ Lord Loudoun was then raising his Highland regiment.

recounting the occurrence five years later, or most likely the general confusion of the time.

That same night the minister communicated his news to the Duke of Argyll's bailie, Donald Campbell of Achindown, who undertook to have the message conveyed to the Duke at Rosneath. It will be noticed that the minister does not claim to have written a letter, he merely sent a message.

In September, 1746, a Board of General Officers was convened to examine into the conduct of Lt.-General Sir John Cope, from the breaking out of the Jacobite rising until the action of Preston pans. The Report of the evidence given to the Board by Cope tells that the first news of the landing of the Prince was in a letter forwarded by the Lord Justice Clerk then at Rosneath (the residence of the Duke), which he had received from the Sheriff Depute of Argyll: this letter enclosed one of intelligence from the Duke's steward or factor at Morven, The letters are printed in the Report of the Board and are here given in full. There can be no reasonable doubt that these letters conveyed the message of the minister of Ardnamurchan. That the message was full of inaccurate news does not neutralize the fact that it gave the earliest information of the Prince's actual landing.

COPY OF A LETTER from the Deputy Sheriff of Argyleshire, to the Lord Justice Clerk at Roseneath, inclosing the letter on the other side, transmitted by his Lordship to Sir John Cope, and afterwards in Sir John's to the Marquis of Tweeddale, of the 8th August, 1745.

MY LORD,

I this moment received the inclosed from Mr. Campbell of Aird, to which I have no observation to make, only that if any Men are landed, it is not improbable they may give out that General Keith is with them, as he is a Man of Character, and a Person that Party has for some time considered as their Hero and firm Friend, which may encourage People to join them. Arisaig is Clanronalds' Country upon the Continent, and bordering upon the Sea to the Northward of Moidart.

I am, My Lord, etc.,

INVERARY, 6th August, 6 at night.

COPY OF A LETTER from Mr. Campbell of Aird, Steward to the Duke of Argyle in Mull at Morven, to the Sheriff-Deputy of Argyleshire at Inverary, transmitted by him to the Lord Justice-Clerk, and by his Lordship to Sir John Cope and then to the Marquis of Tweeddale, in his of the 8th of August, 1745.

DEAR SIR,

This morning I had an Express with very extraordinary News, could it be depended on, viz. That a Vessel is landed in Arisaig with between two and three hundred Men, and two thousand Stand of Arms, among whom are the Pretender's eldest Son, General Keith, and old Lochiel; that there was another Vessel in Company, but was taken, and this narrowly escaped; that part of the Clan of M'Donald are already in Arms, and others making ready to join them.

Any Authority I have for this News is not to be relied on so as to give it Credit in the whole, but that some Vessel is come to those Parts with Strangers on board, is probable, tho' not of the Distinction my Informer calls them, yet I am sure he was told so. More certain Accounts I expect soon, which I will let you know, whatever shape it turns out.

Before this News, whatever Foundation there was for it, it is Fact that something uncommon was expected. I learn nothing as to the Chiefs, what takes air is from the middling Gentry—Order the Bearer to come this Length next Week, and let me know when to wait of His Grace.

Monday Morning, 5th August.

With the knowledge of the Prince's movements and of the letter telling of his arrival which was laid before Cope's Court of enquiry, the message can be traced from Ardnamurchan to Edinburgh.

Achindown must have received it from the minister on the evening of Sunday, August 4th, and have travelled with it all night himself, or sent an express, who would cross Loch Sunart into Morven and communicate his message to Donald Campbell of Airds, the Duke's factor there, probably residing at Lochaline—a distance of about twenty miles from the minister's house at Kilchoan. It reached the factor on Monday morning, August 5th, as he notes in the letter which he at once wrote to Campbell of Stonefield, who was the

Duke's Chamberlain at Inveraray as well as Sheriff Depute of Argyll. The messenger probably crossed the Firth of Lorne by boat from Lochaline to Dunstaffnage at the mouth of Loch Etive, and travelled thence by road up Loch Etive to Taynuilt and by Glen Nant to Taycreggan, crossed Loch Awe to Sonachan and down Glen Aray to Inveraray, where he arrived on Tuesday, August 6th, at 6 p.m. The distance is about eighteen miles by sea and twenty-eight by land, a journey which he did in about thirty-six hours.

At once the message was sent to the Lord Justice Clerk, who was then at Rosneath. Whether the Duke was there also is uncertain. The journals of the day record that when 'these commotions' began the Duke was in the West of Scotland. Also that he came to Edinburgh from Rosneath on August 16th, and left for London on the 21st. The letter sent from Inveraray on the 6th at six o'clock in the evening reached Cope at Edinburgh, via Rosneath, on the evening of the 8th.

On August 9th, the day after receiving the Ardnamurchan message, Cope writes to the Marquis of Tweeddale (Secretary of State for Scotland), 'this morning Lord President (Duncan Forbes) called upon me in his boots on his way northward, and acquainted me with a letter he had just received by express from a gentleman of consequence in the Highlands ... the letter bears that the pretended Prince of Wales came lately on the coast of Uist and Barra the informer at the date of the letter which is the 3rd instant did not know of the actual landing, etc.' The informer we know from the *Culloden Papers*⁷ was the chief of Macleod. His letter, which is there printed in full, has this postscript: 'Young Clanranald has been here with us and has given us all possible assurances of his prudence.' From this it may be understood that Young Clanranald on his mission to Skye had not informed Macdonald and Macleod of the Prince's landing, but only of his appearance off the coast.

The first *military* information of the landing was received by Cope on August 13th in a letter from the officer commanding at Fortwilliam dated August 9th. This letter included a fantastic rumour that 10,000 men were expected.

⁷ *Culloden Papers*, p. 203. The letter was not shown to Cope nor produced at his trial. It was, however, shown to Sir Alexander Macdonald before it was despatched.

The earliest fairly accurate intelligence that Sir John Cope received was in an informer's letter sent by the Duke of Argyll which reached him on August 13th, nineteen days after the actual landing of Prince Charles. The dates in these letters convey a vivid idea of the system of communication at this time in the wildest parts of Scotland. The message from Ardnamurchan took four days, as also did the commanding officer's report from Fortwilliam, while Macleod's letter from Dunvegan took six days to reach Edinburgh.

W. B. BLAIKIE.