Tiree: A History

Part 3 – 1600-1770

Bent grass, rushes and wild water-cress
Are in secret hollows where the thrush sings.
Often we found honey in the banks
From the restless, russet-brindled humming bee.
(John Maclean, the Balemartine Bard)[1]

Neil MacKinnon of Tiree c.1568

Billy Clelland 2001, Revised 2009

[1] TB p3

About the author

Billy Clelland was born in South Lanarkshire, Scotland in 1935. His great grandparents were MacKinnons of Balemartine, Tiree. His maternal grandmother, although not born in Tiree, always maintained Highland traditions and a Sunday afternoon during World War 2 often resembled a ceilidh in that she and her six daughters would sit around the old kitchen table singing Gaelic songs in turn solo and together. Everyone had to participate. Thus he was raised with a smattering of 'the Gaelic' and a keen interest in the island of Tiree. His father, a joiner and typical Presbyterian Lowlander, was involved in construction of the airport at The Reef, Tiree, and was a frequent guest of his MacKinnon in-laws. Lacking the tongue he was annoyed that they occasionally lapsed into Gaelic during his visits.

In 1952 the family emigrated to South Australia where Billy and his brother, Tommy, were welcomed into the Port Adelaide Caledonian Society Pipe Band as experienced although young bandsmen. Billy graduated as an actuary and followed a career in computer science principally in the mining industry. This career allowed him with his family to travel widely and their journey to Scotland enroute to Africa in 1972 was when he made his first visit to Tiree.

Subsequent visits in 1988, 1990, 1992 and 2000 were frustrated by the lack of readily-available documentary evidence of the history of the island. When he began to compile a family tree in 2001, including of course his Tiree ancestors, he found it necessary to start from scratch by building his own 'history of Tiree' as background to the family story. The work was never intended to be published, being simply notes for his Tiree ancestors' chapters to be drawn from. Nevertheless he is more than happy to allow other interested genealogists and historians free access to his research.

Part 3

Contents

Chapter Six: Religious Conflict – Covenanters' Killing Times - Jacobite Rebellion 1689 – Campbells & Macleans – Martin Martin – Illegal Distilling – Highland Diet & Crop Failures

From the mid-17th century and for about one hundred years thereafter, the Stuart monarchy repeatedly vacillated over their religious proclivities and wronged both their Scottish and English subjects. It began with Charles I who was determined, as a staunch opponent of Presbyterianism, to impose Episcopacy as the common religion of his British realm. The Scottish people responded with the National Covenant, endorsed 1st March 1638 in Edinburgh with 40,000 signatories. The Civil War fighting began in February 1639 when a force of Covenanters seized Aberdeen. In the Highlands the Campbells of Argyll, who supported the Covenant, attacked the Catholic MacDonalds, thereby initiating the clan warfare that was to persist throughout the century.[83] The Macleans remained loyal to the Crown during the later Cromwellian conflict and Sir Hector Ruadh Maclean was killed at the Battle of Inverkeithing in 1651 along with 750 clansmen. After the Civil War and Charles I's execution, the English Parliament agreed to the terms of the Solemn League and Covenant but later reneged. Cromwell established garrisons throughout Scotland. In August 1653, the English army of Cromwell embarked upon its decisive military manoeuvre to reduce the isles of Lewis and Mull. The main objective was to secure the northern and western isles against invasion by the Dutch with supplies for the Royalists. From Lewis on 27th August, Colonel Cobbett sailed towards Mull, then under the control of the Royalist Maclean of Duart, but when the English arrived Maclean decamped to Tiree. During a storm three of the five English ships sank below Duart castle. The Protestant Earl of Argyll induced the heritors of Mull to submit to the English forces and to withhold the rents due to Maclean *'as long as he remain in rebellion'*. The Macleans again went into debt in the 1680s to support the Stuart cause.

Charles II was crowned King of Scotland at Scone in 1651, signed the Solemn League and Covenant, but failed in his attempt to regain the throne of Great Britain. After Cromwell's death on 3rd September 1658 there was significant civil unrest created by the political vacuum which concluded with Charles II being fully restored to the British throne in April 1660. Having achieved his goal he abandoned his support of Scottish Presbyterianism and the Covenant and set out to claim superiority over the church in Scotland. His desire to boost his power brought him into direct opposition with the Kirk, as it had his father, and so he determined that the ministers must be brought to heel. In the twenty-five years of his reign he never visited Scotland and his regency was filled by a series of commissioners, latterly by his brother, the future James VII. The Scots parliament opted for an Episcopacy monopoly of religious worship. One of their early dictates was to forbid the holding of religious meetings or 'conventicles' without express royal authority. Bishops and 'curates' were appointed to the church in 1662 and non-conforming ministers were ejected from their churches. Around four hundred ministers were forced from their parishes. The curates reported non-attending parishioners to the government soldiers billeted throughout the Lowland countryside to ensure the success of the king's Episcopacy ruling. The "Killing Times" had begun.

[83] TI p582

By 1678 the western Lowlands was in turmoil and the government sought to contain the deteriorating situation by a show of force which amounted to a levy of six thousand Highlanders and three thousand Lowland troops. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of men, women and children suffered for their religious beliefs. John Graham of Claverhouse, "Bonnie Dundee" in the Highlands, was known in the Lowlands as "Bluidy Clavers". His soldiers, recruited in the Highlands, became notorious to generations as the "Highland Host". To give them the benefit of the doubt, they most likely spoke only Gaelic and, without English, were thus unable to converse with their Sassenach victims. The pillaging and atrocities committed by the government troops and authorities are accounts of unspeakable horror – beheadings of live prisoners, hands and ears cut off before being hung on the gibbet, sold to the American colonies as slaves, unarmed peasants carrying a bible shot without trial – the only crime committed being refusal to accept Episcopacy.

Sixty years later, after Culloden, government troops devastated the Highland population with similar ferocity. To bring this time period into a present-day context, it is only sixty years from 1940 to the year 2000. Many people were alive then who clearly remembered and suffered from Nazi cruelty and persecution in 1940. The Lowlanders recruited for the government forces of 1745 were probably raised on the tales of the suffering of innocent victims during the "Killing Times" and looked upon the Highlanders as among those who had perpetrated those atrocities only sixty years previously. Who can tell? But common to both tragedies is the obstinacy of the Stuart monarchy who must accept the blame for the victims of their intolerance and greed for dictatorial power.

In the Lowlands the war of attrition, Presbyterian rebels and civilians versus the government Episcopalian forces continued into the 1680s. Charles II died in February 1685 and James VII was proclaimed king. His reign became increasingly totalitarian and became focussed on a return to the Roman Catholic religion. English eyes turned towards his son-in-law William of Orange who sent the message to Scotland that he would uphold the Presbyterian church and bring peace to the troubled nation. James VII went into exile and the staunch Jacobite, James Graham of Claverhouse now Viscount Dundee, was proclaimed a traitor. He issued a summons in the name of James VII bidding clansmen to rally at Lochaber on 18th May 1689 and gathered a formidable body of men to engage the 'Williamites'. Maclean of Duart, Cameron of Lochiel and the MacDonald septs each mustered a thousand men and there were contingents from many other clans to swell the Jacobite forces. On 9th June a company of Macleans, three hundred or so, marching to join the rebel army, engaged a force of government dragoons and put them to flight. In late July the Jacobites, at Blair, held a council of war and prepared to face the government troops at Killiecrankie. Sir John Maclean (1674-1716) led his clansmen at Killiecrankie on 27th July 1689. The day belonged to the Jacobites but the death of Viscount Dundee in its final moments robbed them of complete victory and the Stuart cause in Scotland perished with him. The following year on the River Boyne in Ireland saw the end of Jacobite rebellion for James VII and the 17th century. William III confirmed the "Convention of Estates", bishops were abolished, the General Assembly restored and worship and theology retained its intensely Puritan character. Dissidents established the Episcopalian church in Scotland but it enjoyed little support except in the conservative north-east.

Although Lachlan Mor Maclean of Duart's estates had been forfeit in 1594, the Macleans held on to Tiree until 1674 but the island lost its links with the Maclean clan hierarchy when the Campbells dispossessed the chief of Duart. In 1674 'Letters of Fire and Sword' were obtained by the Earl of Argyll and a full-scale assault on Mull took place that year. The Macleans surrendered the island of Mull after fierce fighting only to have the estates returned to them in 1681 when the Earl of Argyll fell from grace with the Crown. But this reprieve was short-lived and the failure of the Jacobite Rebellion ultimately led to the final defeat of Clan Maclean at the battle of Cairnburg Mor in 1691 after which all the Maclean estates were forfeited. Whether or not it was owing to the violent break in the social and political system brought about by the Argyll conquest and the loss of the Macleans' presence and patronage, nothing has survived of the 'art of the bard' [*G bardachd*] on Tiree from before the 18th century. The heritage of classical songs enjoyed by other parts of the Highlands is hardly represented on Tiree. As reported by the Rev Neil Maclean in The Statistical Account 1834-1845 for Tiree and Coll "Tiree was formerly part of the lands pertaining to the Clan Maclean, having been anciently granted to them, as is supposed by the Lord of the Isles; and that name is still one of the most common on the island. It fell into the possession of the family of Argyle in the year 1674, at which time its rent was £1,565/13/4d Scots money, besides some other burdens payable in produce, and usual in these days. Since that period the Earl or Duke of Argyle has been the sole proprietor. There are some plans or surveys of the island, which are in possession of his Grace's chamberlain."[84] The inhabitants of Tiree did not take kindly to the Campbells as landlords, although conditions were favourable enough until the early 19th century. It was at this time that much of the arable farming began to be replaced by cattle grazing, although barley was still grown for whisky.

Tiree was exporting up to 3,000 gallons of whisky a year at the end of the 18th century. In 1801 some 157 men on Tiree were convicted of illegal distilling. The Chamberlain was charged with the task of collecting "every farthing they owe of rent, and give notice to such as do not comply, that they must remove from their possessions at next Whitsunday, and take the necessary steps for effecting that order, which his Grace does not consider harsh as he had timeously signified his desire to have these rents paid to him in barley, and they have chosen to break the law." He was also asked to plan how all the barley crop could be exported to prevent the "pernicious practice of distilling and smuggling whisky". The Chamberlain replied, "Every tenth man culpable of illegal distilling was removed from their land excepting Hector Maclean, tenant in Cornaigbeg, who had a lease until Whitsunday 1804. These men were Lachlan Mclean[85] of Kenovay, Allan McLean his son, Peter McInnis in Vaul, James McDonald in Muirdale, Hector McLean in Ballimeanach, Ferquhar Brown in Ballimeanach, Hector Kennedy [in] Kilchenichmore, John Kennedy his son, John McLean in Haugh, Donald McInnis in Ballivulin, John McArthur (Fencible[86] man) [in] Vaull and Donald McLean in Kinovay. "A difficulty having occur'd of finding a herd to take care of the souming[87] of the Reef, Donald McLean [in] Kinovay, in consideration of his having nine motherless children, and John McArthur, formerly a serjeant in Lord Lorne's

[84] SA1834
[85] In 1841 there resided a Lachlan McLean aged 65 in Kenovay and a John McArthur aged 75 in Caoles.
[86] A militiaman or volunteer enlisted at a crisis.
[87] soum: the proportion of sheep or cattle suitable for any pasture.

Fencible regiment, both having in other respects a good character, have been appointed to take care of that duty, which they have paid good attention to. The other 12 delinquents are still on the island, taking care of their crops, & living in their barns to which they claim a right till next Patrickmass day according to established usage, and in order to implement your Grace's intentions fall to be removed from it then, or at Whitsunday next, as you will be pleased to direct."[88] But getting quit of Tiree was difficult and despite a small allowance, a few were unable to emigrate to America and hopefully the controversy eventually died down.

Martin Martin in his "1703 Description of the Western Isles of Scotland" provides a full and knowledgeable account of Tiree and the isles at that time. He was a native of Skye and a Gaelic speaker thus his work was of considerable significance and verity as he had access to the people of all 'ranks' (as the social classifications were referred to in those days) and what we get is a work 'by an insider' so to speak. When describing Iona he mentions in passing that "the vicar of Iona was parson of Soroby in Tiree and Dean of the Isles".[89] His description of Tiree follows: "This isle lies about eight leagues to the west of Iona, or I Colmkil. This land is low and moorish, but there are two little hills on the south-west side; the mould [soil] is generally brown, and for the most part sandy. The western side is rocky for about three leagues; the isle affords no convenient harbour for ships, but has been always valued for its extraordinary fruitfulness in corn, yet being tilled every year, it has become less fruitful than formerly. There is a plain piece of ground about six miles in compass on the east coast called the Rive [The Reef]; the grass is seldom suffered to grow the length of half an inch, being only kept as common, yet is believed to excel any parcel of land of its extent in the isles, or opposite continent; there are small channels in it, through which the tide of flood comes in and it sometimes overflows the whole. The isle is four miles in length from the south-east to the north-west; the natives for the most part live on barley-bread, butter, milk, cheese, fish, and some roots of silverweed; there are but few that eat any flesh, and the servants use water-gruel often with their bread. In plentiful years the natives drink ale generally. There are three alehouses in the isle; the brewers preserve their ale in large earthen vessels, and say they are much better for this purpose than those of wood; some of them contain twelve English gallons. Their measure for drink is a third part larger than any I could observe in any other part of Scotland. The ale that I had in the inn being too weak, I told my host of it, who promised to make it better; for this end he took a hectic [customary] stone, and having made it red hot in the fire, he quenched it in the ale. The company and I were satisfied that the drink was a little more brisk, and I told him that if he could add some more life to our ale he would extremely oblige the company. This he frankly undertook, and to effect it toasted a barley cake, and having broken it in pieces he put it into the dish with the ale, and this experiment we found as effectual as the first. I enquired of him if he had any more art to revive our ale and then he would make it pretty good; he answered that he knew of nothing else but a malt cake, which he had not then ready, and so we were obliged to content ourselves with what pains had already been used to revive our drink. The natives preserve their yeast by an oaken with which, they twist and put into it; and for future use, keep it in barley straw. The cows and horses are of a very low size in this isle, being in the winter and springtime often

[88] AEI pp54-58
[89] WI p157

reduced to eat sea-ware [sea-weed]. The cows give plenty of milk; when they have enough of fresh sea-ware to feed on it fattens them; the horses pace naturally, and are very sprightly though little. The ground abounds with flint stone; the natives tell me they find pieces of sulphur in several places. The west winds drive the ordinary Indian nuts to the shore of this isle, and the natives use them, as above, for removing the diarrhoea; and the water of the well called Toubir [*G Tobar*] in Donich is by the natives drunk as a catholicon [universal medicine] for diseases. Some years ago, about one hundred and sixty little whales, the biggest not exceeding twenty feet long, run themselves ashore in this isle, very seasonably, in time of scarcity, for the natives did eat them all, and told me that the seapork, i.e. the whale, is both wholesome and very nourishing meat. There is a freshwater lake [Loch an Eilein] in the middle of the isle, on the east side of which there is an old castle now in ruins. The isle being low and moorish is unwholesome, and makes the natives subject to the ague. The inhabitants living in the south-east parts are for the most part bald, and have but very thin hair on their heads. There is a cave in the south-west which the natives are accustomed to watch in the night, and then take many cormorants on it. There are several forts in the isle; one in the middle of it, and Dun-Taelk in Baelly Petris [Balephetrish]: they are in form the same with those in the northern isles. There are several great and small circles of stones in this isle. The inhabitants are all Protestants; they observe the festivals of Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, and St Michael's Day. Upon the latter there is a general cavalcade, at which all the inhabitants rendezvous. They speak the Irish [Gaelic] tongue, and wear the Highland dress. This isle is the [1st] Duke of Argyle's property, it being one of the isles lately possessed by the laird of Maclean; the parish church in the isle is called Soroby, and is a parsonage."[90] In Martin's description of Coll, i*nter alia*, he reports that the inhabitants always feed on oats whereas those of Tiree always feed on barley. He also considers that Coll is "much wholesomer" than Tiree and that there are no venomous creatures on either island. The Highland diet he described as follows, "the generality eat but little Flesh, and only persons of distinction eat it every day and make three meals, for all the rest eat only two, and they eat more Biol'd than Roasted. The ordinary diet is butter, cheese, milk, colworts, brochan [oatmeal and water boiled].[91] The Highland diet in the 18th century was dominated by oatmeal supplemented by fish and shellfish and, from between 1740 and 1750, by potatoes. From 1750 to 1816 the price of grain rose fast, if unevenly over the decades. Crop failures again became common – 1756, 1762, 1771, 1782, 1795, 1799, 1800, 1812 and 1816, for instance, were all bad years, though not all of them were catastrophic. Without potatoes, it would have been disastrous and by 1795 it was a common crop throughout the Highlands.[92] (In 1846, the Committee on Famine Relief estimated that 75% of the peasants' food was derived from the potato.)[93] Turnips were introduced into England from Holland in 1716 and were being grown on the Borders by 1747.

[90] WI p163
[91] *SC* p71
[92] HSP p251
[93] *SC* p72

Chapter Seven: Treaty of Union – Jacobite Rebellion 1715 – Highland Roads – Agricultural Subsistence – Jacobite Rebellion 1745 – Maclean of Drimnin

At the beginning of the 18th century, the financial disaster of the Darien colony, the pressing needs of the nation's economy and the advantages to be got from equal trading privileges with the English together with benefits for politically-minded Scottish peers all contributed to the Treaty of Union which was finally ratified on 16th January 1707. Something of Scotland's independence remained in religion, courts and legal code. The crop seasons since August 1696 – "King William's Dear Years" as some Jacobites styled them – had been seasons of blight and famine and lingered in the minds of people for generations. Up to a third of the population died from malnutrition.[94] Years of dearth came often and, as in 1709, 1740 and 1760, the condition of the people was woeful. The reason was the barbarous mode of its agriculture which would remain in the same backward state for many years to come resulting in famine and deaths from starvation. There are indications that some Highlanders were migrating to the Lowlands for day labour in the harvest in the late 17th century; some who sought temporary work in the Lowlands during the late 1690s refused to return home because conditions there were so bad.[95] Large scale seasonal migration was, however, a phenomenon of the later 18th century.[96]

The Jacobite uprising of 1715 was in fact the second fruitless attempt of five during the 18th century to restore the Stuarts to the throne of Britain. Without substantial help from European monarchies there was little chance of success, as even in Scotland Jacobite sympathies were now in the minority. In 1708 an invasion supported by French troops was abandoned due to bad weather at sea. The Hanoverian King George I entered his new realm in September 1714 and a planned rebellion shortly thereafter by English Jacobites was frustrated by the Whigs[97] before fruition. Then, on 6th September 1715, the Earl of Mar (1675-1732), a disaffected Tory minister, (whose protest was as much against the Union of Parliaments as the Hanoverians) raised the 'Restoration' banner at Braemar and by the end of that month he had established a base at Perth and gathered a force of over 5,000 Highlanders. Clans who 'came out' included the Macleans of Mull, Rum, Coll, Morven, Ardnamurchan and Swinard, in Argyleshire. At Stirling, John Campbell, 2nd Duke of Argyll, could not muster as large a force but was determined to block any southward advance of Mar's Jacobites. Both his father and grandfather had been executed for treason by the Stuart kings. The Duke, who was active in favour of the Union of 1707, was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the army. On 8th September 1715 the Campbell lairds had signed a bond at Inverary to support the government and were mustered under Argyll's brother, the Earl of Islay (1682-1761, he succeeded as 3rd Duke of Argyll in 1743).[98] On 19th October 1715, Sir John Maclean [99]at the head of 350 Jacobite clansmen arrived at Inverary but failed to take the castle. The two Hanoverian generals, Argyll and Cadogan, were continually at loggerheads and poor weather conditions hampered the

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[94] LS p251
[95] SC p57
[96] The lack of alternative sources of employment at home provided the incentives which drove many Highland girls south to work in the harvest fields.
[97] An abbreviation of 'whigamore', an old Scottish name for the Covenanters.
[98] The 2nd Duke left the command in 27th February 1716 to General Cadogan (William, 1st Earl Cadogan, 1691-1776).
[99] He died at Keith on 7th March 1716.

despatch of artillery from London. For five months the Jacobites were in control of most of Scotland. By November 1715, the earl of Mar outnumbered Argyll's forces by a margin of three to one and was ready for a fight. The Macleans were in his front line alongside the MacDonald, Cameron and other prominent clans. They engaged the government forces under Argyll at Sheriffmuir near Stirling on 13th November 1715 and although the losses on both sides appeared almost equal, the withdrawal of the Jacobites to Perth gave advantage to the Duke of Argyll. It was a battle that the rebels had badly needed to win. By February 1716, with the departure overseas of the Old Pretender together with Mar and his fellow-conspirators, the rising was extinguished. However the "1715" was not the fiasco it is usually portrayed and the Hanoverian succession was in actual danger but abandonment of the field by the rebels at Sheriffmuir and the return of the Chevalier to Europe brought welcome relief to the Hanoverian court in London.

On 27 April 1716 at Breacachadh Castle on Coll, the 'gentlemen of Mull', the officers of the Maclean forces in the 1715 Rebellion surrendered their arms to James Campbell, Justice and Sheriff Depute of Argyll. This signified the end of the '15 for the Macleans. Over the previous four weeks Campbell and his fellow Deputy-Lieutenants had supervised the disarming of the mainland districts and islands including Tiree. Appendix B provides a list not only of those adult male inhabitants of Tiree classed as rebels but also includes those who joined the Campbell Hanoverian militia. Many of the men are not simply identified by their first-name and surname: in most cases their patronymics are given.[100] Analysis reveals that of those listed some ninety-nine (23%) of the eligible men were rebels but only nine of Tiree's male inhabitants had joined the militia; a strong case for empathy with the Maclean clan and their cause despite many years of Argyll domination. Nevertheless, in all townships, acknowledged rebels were in the minority; the highest percentage being found at Cornaigmore (46%). Frequently the arms surrendered by the rebels are recorded as having been lodged at 'Kernburg or Kernbolg'. This refers to the Isles of Treshnish, Carnburg Mór and Carnburg Beag, two small rocky islands with grassy crowns, separated by a narrow tidal channel and a place of fierce tides in stormy weather. In 1354 MacDougall had surrendered the district of Mull and its lesser islands to the Lord of the Isles but with the stipulation that 'the castle of Carnburg is not to be given to the MacKinnons'. Hector Maclean of Duart became hereditary keeper of the castle of Carnburg in 1493. In 1504 James I's fleet reduced the castle defences but in 1514 it is recorded that Lachlan Maclean of Duart 'seized the royal castle of Carnburg'.[101] According to Martin Martin (c1695) " *…the small isles of Kernburg-More and Kernburg-Beg; they are naturally very strong, faced all round with a rock, having a narrow entry, and a violent current of a tide on each side, so that they are almost impregnable. A very few men are able to defend these two forts against a thousand. There is a small garrison of the standing forces in them at present.*"[102]

Included among the unfortunate Jacobite prisoners of 1715 were the following Macleans, most of whom were sentenced to transportation: Alexander, tenant to Weem; Allan, ensign in MacKintosh's regiment; Daniel; John; Lachlan, captain in MacKintosh's regiment; and Peter. John Maclean, who was Adjutant to Lord Seaforth, was killed at Sheriffmuir.

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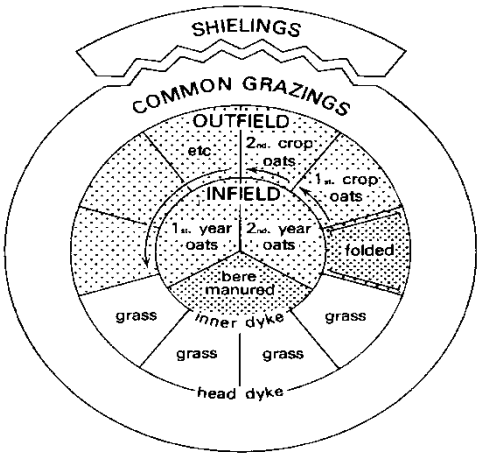
[100] III p113
[101] HWH p282
[102] WI p154

In 1719, there was another short but ignominious attempt to restore the Stuarts which ended as merely a whimper. In the 1720s and 1730s, as a direct consequence, Marshal Wade's major road-building programme began throughout the Highlands, diluting the strength of the clan territories and establishing military garrisons at Fort George, Fort Augustus and Fort William.

From that date, able-bodied men were enjoined to give six days' labour in improving the roads but this was quietly ignored. In the Highlands, sledges and creels, usually borne on the backs of women, were employed to the end of the century. It was needless to introduce carts until the tracks were fit for them.[103] Roads were unmade and in order to get fuel they had to walk for miles over moorland, spend all night out in the open air and return with their scanty loads of ten or twelve peats in every creel borne by the dwarfish horses.[104] To imagine what their world looked like requires an effort of historical imagination. To begin with, one must efface from the map almost all traces of the existing road system and substitute for it a network of tracks meandering between settlements – routes pockmarked with the hooves of animals, fit for cattle, suitable for a tough pony with panniers, creels or bags slung over its back, or drawing a sledge over the slimey mud, but impassable for wheeled vehicles. The state of land communications was both a reflection and a cause of peasant subsistence.[105]

The condition of agriculture at this time in Scotland, and in the Highlands in particular, was archaic and grossly inefficient. This resulted in low production at best and, at worst, starvation and death. Blind worship of tradition blocked every effort and opportunity for change and improvement. Fixed dates for harvest and planting ignored prevailing climatic conditions but did remove the need for planning and cooperation with neighbours. The basic social and economic of mediaeval Scotland had been the farming township, a unit known as the *baile*, *fermetoun* or simply, the *toun*. (As an example, Balephetrish – *Baile Phèadrais*.) Each landholder might have his portion fragmented and dispersed in the form of intermixed strips or parcels, a system of holding layout termed 'runrig' or 'rundale'. The actual cropping was organised on an 'infield' and 'outfields' basis. The infield being an area of intensive cropping and the outfield an area of extensive [general] cropping under which the land was shifted between grass and arable in a rotational manner. Runrig,[106] a primitive form of communal landholding, was an institution which related back to the days when their society was organised on a tribal basis and private property did not effectively exist. In such a scheme, runrig seems to capture perfectly the midway stage between the decay of property in common and the rise of private property. There is no doubt that parallel alignment of strips, sequential allocation to tribal members or periodic reallocation, support this concept.[107] This system allocated each tenant several detached portions and rigs of land by lot and rotation so that each could share in turn the more fertile areas within the *baile*. The diagram below illustrates an example of land allocation in the early ferme touns:

[103] SL18 p167
[104] SL18 p221
[105] HSP p111
[106] The earliest reference to the terms runrig or rundale occurs in a manuscript dated 1428.
[107] LS p141



It is generally agreed that on Tiree and throughout the Western Highlands, each *baile* was likely to have been held by a single tacksman. The term 'tacksman' was also used in the Highlands for individuals who held a whole toun or cluster of touns, for which they effectively acted as a sort of estate factor, leasing (or in their case, sub-letting) land to the tenants who actually worked the ground, and gathering in rents on behalf of the laird. Usually a tacksman held land directly from the chief, acting as a military lieutenant and farmer of rents from his area; he was the social and economic delegate of the landowner who mediated between lord and peasant.[108] It was a system that must have thrived before 1600, but it is not until after 1600 that evidence allows us to define the role of tacksmen in full.[109] When Duncan Forbes of Culloden surveyed the Argyll estate in 1737, he concluded that tacksmen had outlived their usefulness. The following paragraph from his report illustrates the reluctance of the peasants for change cleverly encouraged by their traditional clan superiors, the tacksmen:

From Arros in Mull, we set sail in the morning, and arrived in Tiry before sunset. The people we found more wretchedly poor there than in Mull, as they had been more unmercifully pinched by their exactors. I thought it was proper to view with my own eyes the grounds, and to enquire into their manner of managing them, and their condition, before I made any propositions. And having spent two or three days in that sort of occupation, I called the people together, explained the end of my coming to such as understood English, made the Sheriff do the same in Irish [Gaelic]*, to such as understood no other language, and to prevent mistakes, put the heads of my speech in writing, which I delivered to the Sheriff to be translated into Irish. Severall copies were made and delivered to the tenants of the different districts, who were desired to consider well of them, and to meet me two days after with their resolutions. They came accordingly, but, notwithstanding all the means I had used, they played the Mull game on me all to a man; their offers were all under the present rent, and several of them persisted they would take no leases. Upon this I was forced to do just as I had done in Mull. Two of Sir Duncan's brothers were by him persuaded to make a handsome offer above the present rent for five different farms, as were also two more persons of the island for other possessions. These offers I immediately accepted off, and declared as I had done in Mull, that I would let no more of your Grace's land in Tirry, since the people showed themselves so unsensible of your goodness, or so ungrateful. That I would lease them to their former exactors, which was to them a dreadful threat, and that in two days I would sail on my return to the mainland. In the*

[108] *SC* p13
[109] LS p144

meantime, I suffered the people who were about me to hint that if proper offers were made before my departure, there were still some hopes they might be received.
The full report is set out in Appendix C. Clearly the flaw in the allocation of land on Tiree lay in the practice of sub-letting, firstly by the tacksmen and subsequent sub-letting by the sub-tenant and so on down to the lowest level of tenant who had no possibility of making a living, even a subsistence living, on the scrap of land legally or illegally containing his dwelling house. This so-called tradition continued for at least the next one hundred and fifty years while over time the practice earned the distinction of having been the 'custom from time immemorial', entering the myth of Highland peasant culture.

In particular Forbes of Culloden accused the tacksmen of causing peasant hardship by 'rack-renting'.[110] They were, in effect, simply 'middle men'. Following the report, the 2nd Duke of Argyll broke with tradition and offered tacks of farms to the highest bidders and not to his kin. Nevertheless a report on Tiree in 1771 observed that there was not a tacksman in the island 'whose portion of land is not sub-let in whole or in part to his children or other near relation for their support'. This was a widespread tendency.[111] The real problems and conflict arose when political control over an area, such as Tiree, passed out of the hands of the clan who formed its main occupiers. The group which bore the brunt of subsequent changes and adjustments were the tacksmen. As Cregeen said, they had the task of "binding together all the diverse groups dwelling in the clan's territory". Thus when the Argyll estate gained control over the Maclean lands on Mull in 1679, it was Campbell tacksmen that spearheaded the estate's assertion of authority over the area. Their action was twofold. Either they showed little favour to Maclean tenants when fixing rents or they established Campbells in their place. Both were guaranteed to produce social conflict and to invest the tacksman with an odious reputation. No matter which form it took, so long as it lasted then the tacksman system posed problems for the interpretation of rentals.[112] Cottars, at the bottom of the farm hierarchy, usually had only an acre or so plus their cottage. They were usually relatives of the legal tenant and occasionally paid a share of the rent. In short, they were farm labourers and carried out the husbandry tasks necessary on a large holding. Given the increase in population over the 18th century, the increase in number of these landless peasants as a class throughout the Highlands is not surprising. Subsistence in the Highlands meant land, and few were entirely removed from it, either directly or indirectly. Squatters, on the other hand, usually lived in houses built on the edge of a township's common grazing and paid no rent. The rapid upsurge in population, which had become established by the second half of the 18th century, is clearly illustrated by the evidence from Tiree. Around 1750, its population was 1,509. By 1768, it had increased to 1,676 and by, 1792, to 2,443 and in 1794 to 2,555. Already, by 1768, all but three of its thirty-one *baile* carried more than one tenant, whilst all but two had at least one cottar. The combined figures for the island at this point were 241 tenants and 170 cottars. Population per *baile* rose from 56 in 1768 to 82 in 1792 and 90 in 1800. When the Duke wrote to his Chamberlain in Tiree he said that, "The tenants on many of the farms being too numerous, you must reduce them to one to

[110] A rent for land equal or nearly equal to its full annual value, an exorbitant rent, to exact the highest possible rent.
[111] LS p284
[112] LS p285

each 4 mail land[113], and such of the supernumeraries as are deserving may be continued as they are until 1796 when the leases of [Archibald Campbell of] Frackadale and [Duncan Campbell[114] of] Treshinish expire & then they may be accommodated upon their farms and the present plan of reducing the tacksmen to one for each 4 mail land be carried into execution."[115] This favoured 'four mail land' plan of the Duke's persisted for over ten years until October 1803 before abandonment when the Duke showed a more realistic appreciation of local conditions and a more sympathetic and positive attitude towards the small tenants and crofters.

The decline in agricultural yields has already been presaged by Martin Martin's comments of around 1699, Tiree being "always valued for its extraordinary fruitfulness in corn, yet being tilled every year, it has become less fruitful than formerly". The decline in the Highlands is embodied in the experience of Tiree. The official survey of the Argyll estates in 1737 put it more bluntly: continuous cropping and inadequate manuring, it concluded, had reduced yields sharply, and while the fields appeared thick with herbage, 'hardly one tenth of them is corn, the rest is all wild carrot, mustard, etc.'.[116] Manure was used when available in the 'infield': (Lime was not known as an aid to cultivation before 1730.) Crop succession was customarily, oats then the next year, barley. The 'outfield' was often wretched and ill-tended. In spite of all disastrous experiences over the years, people clung to the old systems. The grain sown was usually the poorest and least prolific. The small black cattle, fed during winter on straw and boiled chaff, were too weak to work in spring. The poor beasts then had to endure the 'lifting'. Tillage was clumsy and primitive: four or five men with oxen could scratch only half an acre daily. Work hours from March to October were from 4:00am to 7:00pm or 8:00pm. In winter there was peat to dig, carry and stack. In the case of Tiree, the time spent was disproportionate to its value. No operation could commence without mutual help and quarrels and misunderstandings frequently became violent. With the runrig system, having no lease, there was no incentive to improve as another tenant might have the land the following year. With land uncleared, unlimed, unmanured, and undrained, it frequently happened that the yield could not even feed the inhabitants. Every innovation was viewed with contempt. Every improvement was slowly and obstinately resisted by an impecunious gentry and a lethargic and timid tenantry. Rental was customarily paid in kind. The tenants were poor and oppressed, not just by rapacious landlords, but by the tyranny of custom.[117] On the proceeds of the small, vexatious croft with the aid of a cow or two, a household subsisted. Not enough work and not enough food. Even by the sea those who were fishers were too lazy to pursue their occupation because there were no markets to trade their produce within easy access. They loitered through the summers and idled through the winters in congenial inactivity. In such conditions there was a stagnation of all energy, a hopelessness of all betterment of life, a docile resignation to a poor and squalid lot.[118] The 3rd Duke of Argyll wrote to his Chamberlain on Tiree "I am resolved to keep no tenants but such as

[113] A mail land is defined as roughly consisting of three soums, that is grazing for three cows or three horses or fifteen sheep.
[114] Duncan Campbell was appointed Chamberlain of Tiree in 1800 but resigned in 1801 possibly being unable to persuade the Duke to postpone his '4 mail land' policy.
[115] AEI p23
[116] LS p299
[117] SL18 p146
[118] SL18 p184

will be peaceable and apply themselves to industry." Without money, nothing could be done to improve the soil, and so long as rents were to a large extent paid in kind there was little money to spend.[119]

Then the next and final Jacobite cause plunged the Highlands into further chaos and misery. Against the wishes of his father, the Old Pretender, the disapproval of the French monarch, Louis XV, and the advice of his Jacobite sympathisers in Scotland, Charles Edward Stuart, later celebrated as 'Bonnie Prince Charlie', landed on the isle of Eriskay on 23rd July 1745 with a handful of companions to raise the standard for Jacobite rebellion against the House of Hanover. Despite a hesitant beginning his rebel army grew to between five and ten thousand followers, mostly Highlanders. When, in response, the Campbells were raised for the government as independent companies and a regular regiment of the line, the old ill-feelings were aroused and a strong core of the Jacobite army came from clans whose hatred of Argyll was stronger than their adherence to the cause of the Stuarts. In the Lowlands the opportunities for Jacobite support were limited and more so considering the official view from the pulpit which by September 1745 was preaching that the success of the rebellion would lead "to that act of slavery, bondage, just fears of Popery and arbitrary power, under which these lands groaned so long, until by the mercy of God we were delivered therefrom by the Glorious Revolution [1689]." Among the clans who 'came out' for the Stuart cause were the Macleans of Mull and the isles, the MacDonalds of Keppoch, Glengarry, Clanranald and Glencoe, the Stewarts of Appin and the Camerons of Lochiel. The story of the advance and initial success of the Jacobite army though Lowland Scotland into England and their ultimate withdrawal to defeat at Culloden on the 16th April 1746, where they faced an army of professional soldiers that contained more Scots than were in the rebel army, is well known and documented.

The Chief of the Maclean clan, Sir Hector Maclean of Duart, who was a Major of Lord John Drummond's French 'Royal Scots' (*Royal Écossais*), was taken into custody in Edinburgh amid rumours immediately before the uprising in June 1745 and sent to London where he was treated as a Prisoner of War during the Rebellion on proving that he was born in France. He was released in 1747. The command of the clan's regiment thus devolved upon Charles Maclean of Drimnin[120] who raised about two hundred men after the battle of Falkirk (17th January 1746). It is quoted that "Nine score Macleans came to the Rebellion, only thirty eight returned." Finally at Culloden, 182 Macleans combined with the Maclachlans into one unit and fought on the right wing of the rebel forces. The officers were Hector Maclean of Torloisk, son of Maclean of Ardgoer, and the commander, old Lachlan MacLachlan, whose body was found after the battle of Culloden behind the Hanoverian rear. (He had learned shortly before he charged for the last time that his son, who was acting as aide-de-camp to the Prince, had been killed by a cannon ball on the way to delivering the Prince's orders to begin the charge.) Charles Maclean of Drimnin was lieutenant-colonel of the MacLachlan-Maclean regiment and his sons served as his captains. Drimnin,[121] who had served with the Royal Navy for some time, was a kind and generous man, but he had a hot

[119] SL18 p205

[120] Drimnin became the home of the Gordon family in 1835 and was the scene of cruel and total eviction in 1855 which left Auliston one of the biggest deserted settlements in Morvern.

[121] Drimnin was grandfather of the founder of the 79th Cameron Highlanders.

temper where his honour was concerned, and it once caused him to strike the Laird of MacLeod across the face in an Edinburgh street, and once to thrash a schoolmaster for impudence (so he thought). All the Macleans, hearing the pibroch of the Argyll and Breadalbane Campbells across the [Drummossie] moor, had a particular and personal interest in the battle, regardless of who it made king. While they had been away from Morven and Ardgour, and from their lonely homes on the Isle of Mull, the Campbells had come down on their glens, burning houses and stripping women of their clothing, driving away cattle or slaughtering them in their byres.[122] Maclean of Drimnin was halfway across the moor when Clan Chattan, or what was left of it, came back from the charge, their faces sullen, and they were like a wave which, receding from the beach, halts and turns the one following. Drimnin saw that his clan was no longer advancing with him. He stopped and called to them, waving his sword, and to his side came his son, Alan, bleeding from a wound. Above the noise of the relentless volleying, Drimnin asked for news of another son, Lachlan. Lachlan was dead, said Alan, whereupon Drimnin turned towards the enemy again saying the boy would be avenged. Alan Maclean pleaded with his father to come away, but the old man shook off his hand. "*Allein, comma leat misse, mas toil leat do bheatha thoir'n arrigh dhuit fhein!*" (Alan, don't think of me, take care of yourself if you value your life.) Drimnin must have run across the front of the Royal line and towards its right, for out of the smoke there appeared before him two troopers of Kingston's or Cobham's. He cut one from the saddle with his sword, and he wounded the other before more rode up and killed him.[123]

A few months later, in August 1746 while the Highlands was being devastated by the victorious Hanoverian army, the Campbell Militia descended on Tiree seeking men who had been 'out' with the defeated rebel army. Appendix D provides details of those arrested. Seven of the eleven men arrested were Macleans. The majority had been recruited for Maclean of Drimnin's regiment and some were, in fact, accused of recruiting on Tiree on behalf of Drimnin. It is apparent that the [3rd] Duke of Argyll's factor was also recruiting on the island for the Campbell Militia. The conflict between the two parties can be readily imagined. At least twelve other members of the Maclean clan from outside Tiree, who escaped execution, were convicted and transported to America from Tilbury in March 1747[124]. After confinement at Dumbarton Castle, the Tiree prisoners were then transferred to Glasgow and ultimately released in July 1747. It is not known if any or how many islanders died during the rebellion. However, compared to the atrocious treatment suffered by the mainland Highlanders, Tiree would appear to have been fortunate that the Campbells were their resident victors despite the Campbell Militia seeing action on Drummossie Moor.

During the Young Pretender's flight through the Highlands after Culloden to avoid capture by the government authorities until he could escape to France, Tiree briefly became part of his cloak of disguise. After the long and hazardous sea voyage from Arisaig to Benbecula the Prince and his companions hid for two days in a deserted hut at Rossinish. On Monday, the 28th April 1746, the Prince and his party put to sea again in an eight-oared boat, and now adopted new

[122] CU p53
[123] CU p74
[124] NGS Quarterly, Vol 64.

identities. O'Sullivan[125] posed as 'old Mr Sinclair', the Prince as his son, and Father Allan MacDonald became Mr Graham. Their destination was the island of Lewis, and the crew had been given instructions about the tale they were to tell there. To the people of Lewis they were to explain that old Mr Sinclair, his son, and Mr Graham were the captain, mate and bo'sun of a ship wrecked on the Isle of Tiree. They were natives of Orkney, and were anxious to return there.[126] But this story never had to be put to the test.

[125] The Adjutant and Quartermaster to the Jacobite army, John William O'Sullivan, was an Irish soldier of fortune and one of the 'Seven Men of Moidart'.
[126] PH p37

Chapter Eight: Proscription Act - Highland Garb – Heritable Jurisdiction – Improvements

The failure of the '45 Rebellion and the imposition of harsh measures upon the people of the Highlands, including the new Disarming or Proscription Act of 1746, hastened the collapse of the clan system and near extinction of the Gaelic language and culture in the north-west and western isles: the *Gaidhealtachd*. The Act *inter alia* proscribed the wearing of Celtic dress, an action which Henry VIII of England had previously taken against the Irish. The first target of the Proscription Act was "Bonnie Prince Charlie" himself, who was shown in innumerable caricatures wearing Highland dress. Perhaps the most famous was one captioned "A likeness notwithstanding the disguise that any person who secures the Son of the Pretender is intitled to a reward of £30,000." But, equally, the Proscription was intended to destroy the political and racial symbolism of the tartan Highland dress – and to destroy any notion that the Highlanders might have had that they were different (and separate) from subjects in the rest of the British Kingdom. Thus any Highlander whose loyalty was suspect was made to take the following oath:

> *I, ----------, do swear, and as I shall have to answer to God at the Great Day of Judgement, I shall not nor shall have in my possession any gun, sword, pistol or arm whatsoever; and never use any tartan, plaid or any part of the Highland garb; and if I do so, may I be cursed in my undertakings, family and property – may I never see my wife and children, father, mother and relations – may I be killed in battle as a coward, and lie without Christian burial, in a strange land, far from the graves of my forefathers and kindred; may all this come across me if I break my oath.*

Rather illogically, it did not apply to the Highland Regiments,[127] women, or landowners and sons of landowners: it was assumed that all Jacobite landowners had either been killed or had fled to France, and that all the others were loyal to George II. Bagpipes [*G pìob mhór*] were considered to be a 'weapon of war' and the playing or carrying of them forbidden. The Proscription was a terrible burden to place on a proud race, and even more terrible because, for the first few years of its enforcement, troops were ordered 'to kill upon the spot any person whom they met dressed in the Highland garb.' Given that many ordinary Highlanders spoke only Gaelic, and might never even hear of the Act if they lived in remote areas, it was just as well that its strict enforcement was not maintained for long, and that, following a campaign by the Highland Society of London, the Act was repealed in 1782.[128] But the old attachment to the Highland dress had died in a generation, the old patterns were forgotten. Forgotten, too, was the skill of making dyes from the herbs on the hills.[129] And, as absurd as it may now appear, within 75 years of its having been proscribed the kilt had become Scotland's national dress.

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[127] At this time there were only two Highland Regiments (one soon to be disbanded).
[128] TA pp20-22
[129] CU p266

What, in fact, had male Highlanders been wearing that required proscription? To begin with, the word 'tartan', of French origin, does not exist in Gaelic. The Gaelic word is *breacan*, which is derived from *breac*, meaning 'chequered' or 'variegated'. This style of 'checked' cloth dates from the earliest descriptive records of garments worn by the ancient Celtic tribes of Europe. The Gaelic word *plaide* simply means 'blanket'. The traditional dress was the 'belted plaid' (G *feileadh-mor*, big wrap). This was a piece of cloth approximately 18 foot [5.5m] long by 6 foot [1.8m] wide [two widths of 19-25 inches (48-63cm) sewn together]. The material worn by men was a thicker, coarser woollen cloth called *cath-dath* (from G *cath*, battle and *dath*, colour) for both work and at war. This was pleated along its length in the middle, of a width suitable to the girth of the wearer and sufficient to extend from one side of his back to the other, leaving as much at each end that would cover the front of the body, overlapping each other. Using an average height from the 18th century, of say, 5' 6" [168cm], the plaid would be bound with a leather belt around the waist of the wearer at 18" [45cm] from one end such that the smaller side fell down as a skirt to the middle of the knee cap with the pleats formed at the rear and un-pleated cloth doubled over (over-lapped) in front. The upper 4' [122cm] part was then fastened at the shoulder with a large brooch or pin and tastefully arranged according to the preference of the wearer. Sometimes the excess cloth on the right side was tucked under the belt. Some wearers found it more convenient to pleat the plaid over a leather belt laid on the ground, then lie down on the plaid and bind the belt around the waist. It had been a convenient mode of dress for centuries as it could also be used as a cloak or, at night, as a blanket. The little kilt or filibeg (G *feileadh-beag*), now recognised universally as "Highland dress", essentially consists of the lower skirt part of the belted plaid. It is pleated and sewn with sufficient cloth being left plain at both ends, which are crossed in front of the body. It is fastened around the waist most commonly by adjustable straps and buckles. This garment was reputedly introduced and worn by an Englishman called Thomas Rawlinson who smelted iron in Glengarry and Lochaber about 1725. This example was followed by Iain MacDonnel, Chief of Glengarry and the earliest illustration of the 'little kilt' probably appears in the portrait of his son, Alasdair Ruadh MacDonnel, 'The Young Glengarry', painted after his release from the Tower of London in 1747, where the 'little kilt' is worn by a retainer in the background.[130]

The every-day costume of the Highlander was as diverse among individuals and classes as it had been elsewhere at any time in history. The description of clothing worn by the islanders of Skye around 1695 by Martin Martin[131] offers proof of this: "The first habit wore by persons of distinction in the islands was the *leni-croich*, from the Irish word *leni* [*leine*], which signifies shirt, and *croach*, 'saffron' because their shirt was dyed with that herb. The ordinary number of ells used to make this robe was twenty-four [33m]. It was the upper garb, reaching below the knees, and was tied with a belt around the middle; but the islanders have laid it aside about a hundred years ago [c1600]. They now generally use coat, waistcoat, and breeches, as elsewhere, and on their heads wear bonnets made of thick cloth – some blue, some black and some grey. Many of the people wear trews. Some have them very fine woven like stockings of those made of cloth. Some are coloured, and others striped. The latter as are well-shaped as the former

[130] TA p26
[131] WI pp128-129

[stockings], lying close to the body from the middle downwards, and tied round with a belt about the haunches. There is a square piece of cloth which hangs down before. The measure for shaping the trews is a stick of wood, whose length is a cubit,[132] and that divided into the length of a finger and a half a finger, so that it requires more skill to make than the ordinary habit. Persons of distinction wear the garb in fashion in the south of Scotland. The plaid worn only by the men is made of fine wool, the thread as fine as can be made of that kind. It consists of divers colours; and there is a great deal of ingenuity required in sorting the colours so as to be agreeable to the nicest fancy. For this reason the women are at great pains, first to give an exact pattern of the plaid upon a piece of wood,[133] having the number of each thread of the stripe on it. The length of it is commonly seven double ells.[134] The one end hangs by the middle over the left arm, the other going around the body, hangs by the end over the left arm also – the right hand above it is to be at liberty to do anything upon occasion. Every isle differs from each other in their fancy of making plaids as to stripes in breadth and colours. This humour is as different through the mainland of the Highlands, in so far that they who have seen those places are able at first view of a man's plaid to guess the place of his residence."[135] In a crown charter of 1587, to Hector Maclean of Duart, the feu duty payable on the lands of Nerrabolsadh in Islay, was sixty ells [82m] of cloth of white, black and green colours. These colours correspond to the colours of the tartan now called the 'Hunting Maclean' but it is doubtful if their arrangement was exactly the same as that in use at the present time. This may well be the first record of a, so-called, 'clan tartan'. It is common knowledge that the tartans worn by the clansmen at Culloden bore no relationship to the tartans marketed today as clan tartans. The majority of clan tartans only date from the "Plaided Panorama" surrounding the visit[136] of George IV to Scotland in 1822 and the Victorian fervour to claim connection to a Highland clan. Alexander Macdonell of Glengarry formed the 'Society of True Highlanders' and in 1822 he listed a gentlemen's full Highland kit which members were expected to wear: "A belted plaid and waist Belt, a Tartan Jacket with T.H. [True Highlanders] buttons & Shoulder buckles, a scarlet coat THrs Cut with THrs Buttons, A cocked bonnet with Clan Badge and Cockade, A Purse and belt, A Pair of Highland Garters, A Pair of Hose, A pair of Highland Brogues (with whangs) and A Pair of Clasps to Do for Court use". Along with this went the arms. "A Gun (or Fusée) with a sling, A broad Sword and Shoulder Belt, a Target and Slinging Belt, A Brace of Highland Pistols and belt, A 'core Dubh' or Hoc knife called the 'Skian', a powder Horn with Chain or Card, a short Pouch and cross shoulder belt." He missed the dirk, the eighteen inches of cairngorm-encrusted kitsch with its built-in knife and fork but his list captures the pantomime nature of the full Garb. The codification of tartan had not been considered before although as soon as it was mentioned it seemed obvious – but not to everyone. David [Stewart of Garth] first wrote to the chief of Clan Donnachaidh, Col Alexander Robertson of Struan. The answer came back "More than twenty years ago [c1794] I wished to ascertain what the pattern of the Clandonachy Tartan was, and applied to different old men of the Clan for information, most of whom

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[132] The length of the arm from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger, from 18 to 22 inches [45-55cm].
[133] *Maide dalbh* or pattern sticks served as guides for weavers.
[134] 'Ell' is an old cloth measure equal to 44" (112cm).
[135] A convincing argument for tartan designs being related to the district of origin rather than to a specific clan. The design being more a function of the skill of the weaver than of one's clan loyalty.
[136] KJ p225

pretended to know what the pattern was, but as no two of the descriptions I received were exactly similar, and as they were all very vulgar and gaudy, I did not think proper to adopt any of them." One suspects that Struan had hit the nail on the head. Tartans were gaudy – that was their point – the gaudier the better because a good loud red had once required rare and expensive dyes and signalled wealth. It was a symbol of status for what seem to have been garments most used when travelling. But, although some case could be made for district tartans where the natural dyes available in any neighbourhood would be reflected in its product, of clan associations there was little sign. David [Stewart of Garth] told Andrew Robertson[137] about it. "A few more years as you justly observe and the memory of such things will be lost, and the truth of this cannot be stronger proof that Strowan [Struan] does not properly know what his own Tartan is." It does not cross his [Stewart of Garth's] mind that the memory may not have been so much lost as never having been there at all.[138] And, to finish with Martin Martin's description from around 1700: "When they travel on foot the plaid is tied on the breast with a bodkin[139] of bone or wood (just as the *spina* [fish-bone] wore by the Germans, according to the description of Cornelius Tacitus [Roman historian, 55-120AD]). The plaid is tied round the middle with a leather belt. It is plaited from the belt to the knee very nicely. This dress for footmen[140] is found much easier and lighter than breeches or trews."

An anecdote from the era of proscription and the Highland regiments concerns the " *Taigh na Truish*" [House of Trousers] near the Clachan Bridge connecting Seil to the mainland. In 1809 the 91st Argyllshire Highlanders were ordered that they must wear trews on the grounds that 'the wearing of kilts is objectionable to the people of South Britain'. A year later a further order abolished even tartan trews, replacing them with trousers of hodden[141] grey. So ashamed were the Highlanders at being reduced to ordinary line soldiers that, on returning home on leave, their first action was to strip off the hated trousers at the inn at Clachan, and put on a borrowed kilt for their journey home. The inn became a veritable cloakroom of trousers and kilts, and its curious name commemorates the shameful breaking of enlistment promises by London. The War Office had not finished its spiteful work, for in 1850, the regiment even had its pipers abolished. However in 1871, the 91st Regiment formed the guard of honour at the marriage of Queen Victoria's daughter, Louise, to the Duke of Argyll, and as a token of thanks, the Queen asked what favour she could grant. Without hesitation, the commanding officer replied that the only thing the regiment desired was to be dressed in the kilt. This was granted – to the fury of the War Office – and the regiment given the title of Princess Louise's Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. Thus thanks to Queen Victoria, the House of the Trousers at Clachan was no longer needed to hide the soldiers' shame.[142]

The Heritable Jurisdictions (Scotland) Act of 1747 removed from chiefs their hereditary power to impose punishments of imprisonment or death. They became ordinary landlords. As the clan

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[137] Andrew Robertson, a fashionable miniaturist of the time, suggested in 1814 that "Tartans, Plaids, and Banners" of the clans ought to be preserved. FH p71

[138] FH pp74-75

[139] A small instrument for pricking holes such as a pin or small dagger.

[140] Martin is describing 'men travelling by foot' not servants or 'flunkies' from a later period.

[141] Coarse, undyed homespun woollen cloth.

[142] The Scots Magazine, Vol 119, No 5, pp541-542, August 1983.

chief was cunningly transformed into a laird, his clansmen became mere tenants holding their land on disadvantageous terms and without security of tenure. By the 1770s most of the aristocracy of Gaeldom had decided that their future lay in the mainstream of Scottish and United Kingdom culture.[143] After the '45 it was necessary to break down feudal power. Baron baillies often enriched themselves on 'duties'; for example, a day's labour from every tenant, goods of people sentenced to death and a horse or cow of a deceased tenant.[144] In response to Dr Johnson's comment that, "I am not well enough acquainted with the country to know what degree of evil the heritable jurisdictions occasioned." James Boswell responded that "hardly any; because the chiefs generally acted right, *for their own sakes*."[145] [my italics] Elsewhere Boswell quoted the words of MacLeod of Dunvegan, "Government has deprived us of our ancient power; but it cannot deprive us of our domestick satisfactions. I would rather drink punch in one of their houses' [meaning the houses of his tenants] 'than be enabled by their hardships, to have claret in my own." Boswell commented, "This should be the sentiment of every chieftain. All that he can get by raising his rents, is more luxury in his own house. Is it not better to share the profits of his estate, to a certain degree, with his kinsmen, and thus have both social intercourse and patriarchal influence?"[146] This subject arose on more than one occasion on their travels. As a mere but observant tourist, Johnson detected the discontent[147] brewing between the landholder-chiefs and their tenantry as early as 1773. This situation persisted for a hundred more years and longer into the modern stalemate between rich incomers, absentee landlords and ordinary folk struggling to make a living like their fellow-countrymen south of the Highland line. Johnson described a rapacious Highland chief as having "*no more the soul of a chief, than an attorney who has twenty houses in a street, and considers how much he can make by them.*"[148]

The superiority of Clan Campbell on Tiree had been reinforced by the failure of the '45 and the misfortunes suffered by Clan Maclean. It would now be virtually impossible for the Macleans to claim loyalty from clansmen of their name resident on Tiree who were tenants of the hated Campbells. Neither the English ministry nor the Pretenders ever understood the extent to which the rebellions were provoked not by loyalty to the Stewart cause but by hatred of the great Clan Campbell, whose steady aggrandisement at the expense of smaller, weaker and less politically-minded clans was a cardinal objective of government policy: after all, the political managers of Scotland from 1725 to 1761 were successive Dukes of Argyll, and the idea of this clan to hold down and civilise its neighbours had been part of royal policy since the days of James VI. This was largely the reason why the rebellions in 1715 and 1745 produced so brilliant an explosion in the north and so little effect in the south: Lowlanders had no special reason to hate the Campbells or to love the Stewarts, and they were certainly not inclined to rise spontaneously against the Westminister government at the beck of a Catholic prince.[149] The Campbells represented the most important support of the Whig and Protestant cause in

[143] FH p16
[144] SL18 p496
[145] JTH p237
[146] JTH p288
[147] JWS pp71-74
[148] JTH p376
[149] HSP p207

Scotland. The experiences of the '45 and the years afterwards were convincing to the [3rd] Duke of Argyll that Campbells made the best tenants. The open Jacobitism of Morvern and the resistance to recruitment for the Campbell Militia which Airds and Barnacarry encountered in Mull and Tiree in 1745 did not magically disperse. In the Seven Years War of 1756-1763 Macleans and others recruited in Mull and Tiree for service were suborned by chieftains of that clan in Mull.[150]

By 1730 lairds' incomes had become no larger but customs had become more expensive. The Dukes of Argyll had been long interested in the improvement of their vast estates, not, of course, solely for the welfare and comfort of their tenants but to increase the income derived as rents to finance their ducal life-style in both Scotland and England. As recorded previously, Duncan Forbes of Culloden had been engaged in 1737 to complete a survey of the Argyll estate from which some efficiencies in management were planned. Following annexation of the Maclean lands on Tiree and Coll in 1674, the new population of Campbell tacksmen, sub-tacksmen and their sub-tenants lived as loyal, privileged and envied colonists amidst the dispossessed clansmen. As a source of military power, the new lands were proved to be of doubtful value. To realise the full value of the annexation, the land had to be exploited as a source of revenue not men. It was the 2nd Duke, who succeeded in 1703 and died in 1743, who finally broke with tradition, removed the great tacksmen and so established the principle which might lead to the expansion of commercial opportunities.[151] From 1744 all tenants had to subscribe oaths of loyalty and allegiance and the Duke directed his factors to prefer tenants who were "well-disposed to my interest".[152] In Tiree, where the most positive measures for the expansion of the island's resources were attempted, the leaders of the resistance of 1745 were continually stirring up disturbances. Conspiracy and non-cooperation were the answer of the native clans to dispossession and served to "obstruct any instructions Your Grace is pleased to give relating to the pollicie of that island." But it was confidently expected that the inhabitants would be wooed from their disaffection by the manifest benefits of the new times.[153] In 1770, half of the island was held by fourteen farmers who had drained land for hay and pasture. Instead of exporting live cattle (which were often exhausted by the long journey to market and thus fetched low prices), they began to export salt beef in barrels to get better prices. The rest of the island was let out to forty-five groups of tenants on co-operative Joint Farms: agricultural organisations probably dating from clan times. Field strips were allocated by annual ballot. Sowing and harvesting dates were decided communally and by tradition. It is reported that in 1774, Tiresians were then 'well-clothed and well-fed, having an abundance of corn and cattle'.

Tiree was mainly devoted to the production of grain, and for this reason the small tenant was of greater importance than the tacksman to the estate. Roughly 40% of the farms were in the hands of tacksmen in the early 1770s – four farms held by Macleans and nine or ten by Campbell tacksmen; all the Campbells, save the factor, were non-residents. Cattle raised on their Tiree farms were first brought to their lands in Mull and Morvern before being sold. The bulk of the

[150] AEI pxvii
[151] AEI pxii
[152] AEI pxv
[153] AEI pxviii

land was thus in the hands of the small tenants. In 1776, there were ten tacksmen (only four resident), 145 tenants, 36 mailers, 52 workmen, 197 cottars and 86 unmarried in–servants. Turnbull's map of 1768 shows the houses of the tenants and the servants clustering together fairly near to the sea, and the farms carved out of the island to give each of them access to the shore, with its bounty of sea-ware, drift-wood and fish, and to the common mosses and pastures that occupied the interior of the island. Hay and potatoes had been recently introduced, and other improvements had been attempted, among them land drainage, the construction of a pier at Scarinish and of a sea barricade on the north of the island, and the spinning of linen. Many difficulties had arisen to frustrate these improvements, and there was still no safe harbour, the barricade had been destroyed by the sea, the linen industry had disappointed the hopes of the partners and further advances in agriculture waited on enclosures. On the runrig farms tradition was still all-powerful and the hand of the improver was rarely seen. An ancient cycle of communal activities carried forward the work of the farm from seed-time to harvest and general grazing of the winter-town by the whole town stock. Each year saw the reallocating by lot of the arable lands of the farm among the joint tenants (*Remarks on the Island of Tiry 1771*).

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