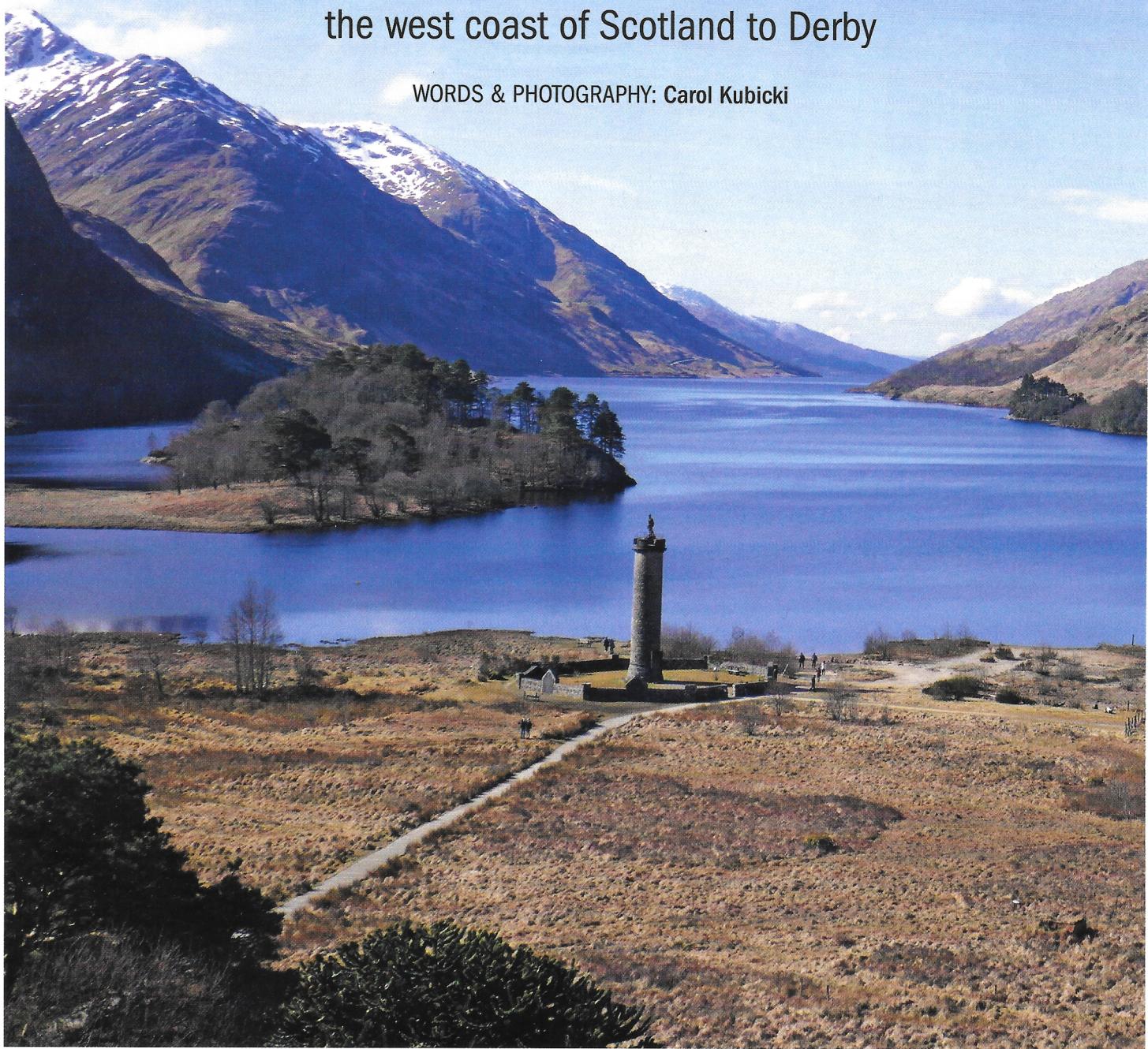


On the trail of **BONNIE PRINCE CHARLIE**

Follow in the famous prince's footsteps for 500 miles from
the west coast of Scotland to Derby

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY: Carol Kubicki





US AND OUR 'VAN



Carol Kubicki...

and her husband, Anthony, use their Devon Tempest to pursue their hobbies of walking and cycling while exploring the historical and natural environments



2015 Devon Tempest on a Renault Master MWB. This is our second Devon Conversions 'van. At 5.3m we think it's enormous and, with a washroom, also luxurious

LEFT The nineteenth century monument at Glenfinnan

Scotland sparkled in the sunshine while seals bathed in the sheltered sea loch as I stood at the spot where Bonnie Prince Charlie arrived on the Scottish mainland on 23 July, 1745; I knew this was a memorable moment.

The Prince's Cairn marks the rocky promontory on the beautiful Loch nan Uamh, near Arisaig, where Charlie landed, saying, "I am come home."

Driven by the conviction that his father, James Stuart, was the rightful king, Charlie hoped the Scottish clans would gather to raise a Jacobite rebellion (from Jacobus, the Latin for James) against the Hanoverian King George II.

Few journeys are packed with more romance and misadventure than that of the dashing and charismatic 24-year-old Prince Charles Edward Stuart. His bid for the throne is a story of dreams and defeat and I wanted to follow his footsteps to understand the man and his odyssey.

Over five months Charlie led the Jacobite army towards London. It was this hopeful journey south that I wanted to explore in a fortnight-long trip.

Charlie instructed the clans to gather at nearby Glenfinnan on 19 August, 1745 and, by early evening, a Jacobite army of 1,200 clansmen had gathered. William Murray of Blair Castle raised the standard, declared war on the King and the soldiers threw their bonnets in the air.

We parked the 'van at the Glenfinnan Monument that commemorates this moment and showed our tickets to the National Trust guide who told us, "Ninety per cent of visitors are here for Harry Potter." He was thrilled that we were there for the '45. I squeezed out of the hatch onto the monument's airy narrow walkway and enjoyed the stunning views over Loch Shiel and the viaduct that attracts 'Potterites'.

By the time the Jacobites left Glenfinnan they were 3,000 strong and a reward of £30,000 was on Charlie's head. We visited two museums holding Jacobite relics.

Fort William's West Highland Museum has fragments of tartan plaid reputedly worn by Charlie and an intriguing 'secret' portrait. This distorted image on a tray ▶

"At a viewpoint over the *remote* glen surrounded by *dramatic* snowy peaks, we sat on a bench, resting in the *silence*"

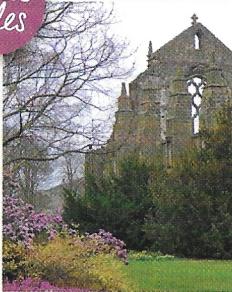
THE JOURNEY

We travelled from Salford via the M6, M74, M80 onto the A82 to Fort William and the A830 to Arisaig driving north and returning along the A82, the A9 and the M9 to Edinburgh and the A68 and the A7 to Carlisle, the M6 and M61 to Manchester and the A6, A523 and A52 to Derby. We spent 13 days exploring in April

THE COSTS

Fuel average 34mpg.....	£167
Site fees	£261.10
Attractions two adults: Glenfinnan Monument, Clan Cameron Museum, Blair Castle, Linlithgow Palace, Palace of Holyroodhouse, Lowther Castle, Tullie House Museum.....	£111.64
Public transport two adults: bus from Fort Augustus - Inverness, train from Inverness - Newtonmore, day ticket for Edinburgh buses/trams, taxi from Newtonmore-Garva Bridge.....	£107
Total costs.....	£646.74

1,020 miles



ABOVE INSET Abbey ruins in the gardens of the Palace of Holyroodhouse; the monument at Glenfinnan overlooks Loch Shiel

BELOW The viaduct at Glenfinnan featured in Harry Potter films

FAR RIGHT TOP The view along the River Spey from General Wade's Garva Bridge

FAR RIGHT BELOW The Commando Memorial at Spean Bridge

becomes an image of Charlie when reflected in a goblet, allowing supporters to toast him discreetly. Both this museum and the charming Clan Cameron Museum at Achnacarry have examples of Charlie's exquisite embroidered waistcoats.

From Achnacarry we played Pooh sticks over the bridge at Witches' Pool before driving up to the Commando Memorial. After earlier Jacobite rebellions, General Wade supervised road building in the Highlands from 1725 to expedite troop deployment. Ironically, these roads proved valuable to the Jacobite army. From the memorial we traced their footsteps along

Wade's Road to Highbridge, where a towering three-arched bridge spanned the craggy gorge.

The Jacobites climbed Wade's Road over the Corrieyairack Pass from Fort Augustus; this remote track, now closed to vehicles, once continued to Ruthven Barracks. Set on a natural mound, we explored Ruthven Barracks and spotted snipe, lapwing, oystercatcher and redshank in the surrounding wetland.

I've long wanted to cross the Corrieyairack Pass and planned to complete it in the opposite direction to the Jacobites. The surfaced road ends just beyond Wade's handsome Garva Bridge and we booked a dawn taxi to here from our campsite.

Ahead of us were 18 miles of remote track, climbing to a height of 2,526ft. As we set off the sun cleared and the mountains and the warmth and solitude were bliss. Only red deer, mountain hares and Wade's stone bridges punctuated our route.

We soon reached the snowline and, near the summit, we struggled through deep drifts in a winter wonderland, blown away by the breathtaking panorama of snow-capped peaks. Descending, the view along the expanse of Loch Ness signalled our return to the throng. A bus and train took us to Newtonmore leaving three miles of dusk walking back to the 'van. It had been a demanding and exhilarating day.

After the rigours of the pass we (and Charlie) needed rest and Blair Castle, the ancestral home of the Dukes of Atholl,

TOP TIPS

The car park at Linlithgow Palace has an archway that is 8ft 8in (2.65m) high at the sides. There is no sign for the height and motorhomes regularly get stuck here. We used the pay and display car park just below the palace

Climbing the 1745 monument at Glenfinnan is not for those who are claustrophobic, have broad shoulders (as the hatch at the top is narrow) or are concerned about heights

Route finding on the Corrieyairack Pass isn't difficult, but it's an isolated route over the Monadhliath Mountains between Laggan and Fort Augustus and only reasonably fit and well-equipped walkers should attempt it. The route is also popular with mountain bikers



was ideal. The incumbent Duke of Atholl supported the Hanoverians and fled the castle as the Jacobites approached, allowing his brother, William, who raised the standard at Glenfinnan, to take possession of the family home. This family remained divided and fought on both sides at Culloden eight months later.

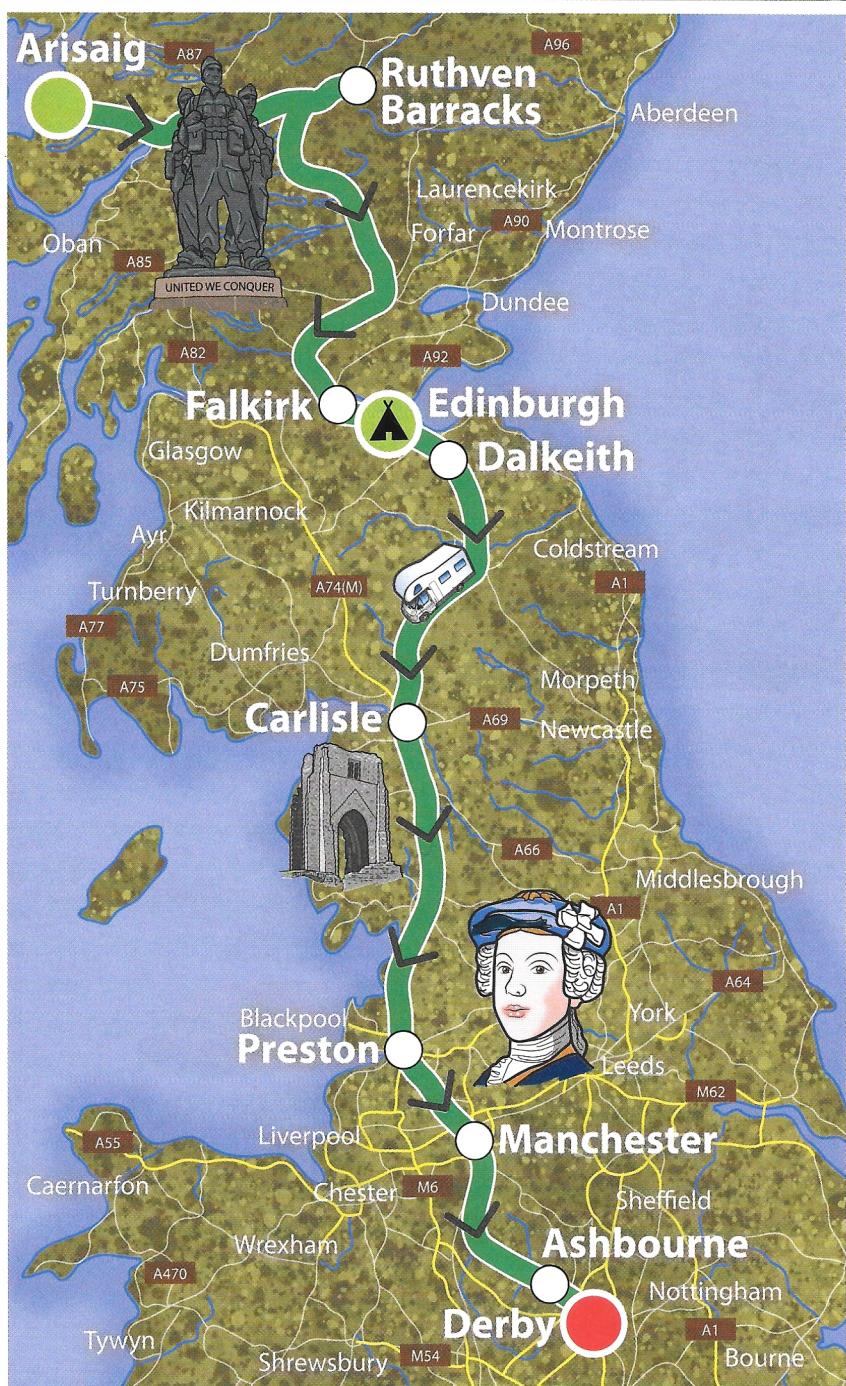
Scotland generously gifted us another sunny day to explore Blair Castle's gardens. I imagined Charlie wandering these same paths discussing strategy with his generals.

From Old Blair's ruined church we took a gentle walk along the gorgeous Glen Tilt. Red squirrels scampered above us on their treetop superhighway and coal tits chirped in hedges. At a viewpoint over the remote glen surrounded by dramatic snowy peaks we sat on a bench, resting in the silence.

The Jacobite's route followed the modern A9 south and they arrived triumphantly in Perth to gather support and funds. Charlie visited Scone Palace, home of Jacobite supporters and packed with symbolism; monarchs were crowned in this ancient Scottish capital until Charles II in 1651.

We stood by the replica Stone of Destiny (the original in Edinburgh is still used in coronations) admiring the small sandstone chapel surrounded by daffodils and then ran aimlessly around the intricate beech hedge maze in Scone's lovely gardens.

On the approach to Edinburgh, Charlie visited two palaces. Linlithgow Palace, the birthplace of Mary Queen of Scots, is today a substantial and picturesque lochside ruin. ▶





In contrast, the Palace of Holyroodhouse remains the Edinburgh royal residence and is crammed with ornate ceilings and faded tapestries that helped me visualise how Linlithgow would have looked in its heyday.

As I explored all of Linlithgow's wide winding staircases (built for full gowns), the grand statement this palace made was obvious. A member of staff, delighted to hear about our journey following Charlie, told us the palace has 118 fireplaces and 700 windows. Both palaces have a long gallery for glittering balls. At Holyroodhouse it is lined with Stuart dynasty portraits and I closed my eyes to imagine hearing the music and feeling the dancers swishing by.

The army marched jubilantly to Edinburgh in mid-September and Charlie stayed at Holyroodhouse for six weeks, acquiring the nickname, Bonnie Prince Charlie, and posing for portraits. Victory at the nearby Battle of Prestonpans raised morale and, as the crowds cheered and drums played, Charlie must have felt the crown was within reach.

In London, Parliament was recalled and troops mobilised.

Many loyal Jacobites advised consolidating in Edinburgh before continuing, but Charlie was determined to

BOOKS

Walking With Charlie: In the Footsteps of the Forty-Five by Steve Lord
ISBN 9780954442002

Fight for a Throne: The Jacobite '45 Reconsidered by Christopher Duffy
ISBN 9781910777053



Explore Scotland's story with *History Scotland* magazine, a celebration of the country's rich history, archaeology and heritage
historyscotland.com
pocketmags.com/history-scotland-magazine

ABOVE The turreted Blair Castle is a stunning landmark

win the throne for his father and persuaded the clan chiefs to continue south through England's northwest where Jacobite support was strong. Well rested, the army crossed the Scottish Borders, stopping at Dalkeith Palace and Thirlestane Castle.

We traced their route on a damp foggy day. The weather cleared as we reached Carlisle to see its magnificent castle before warming up in Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery, where the display about the Jacobite offensive tells the story of Carlisle's proud resistance over several days.

A Jacobite army of 4,500 soldiers and 500 cavalry marched through Penrith. In nearby Clifton I told the friendly campsite owner that we were visiting Lowther Castle and he reminisced about the ruin. "My parents went to dances there in the 1950s before they removed the roof."

This grand seventeenth century house was abandoned decades ago and reopened fairly recently. There are reports that Charlie visited Lowther Castle and the Jacobites certainly marched across the estate.

The sun returned for our tour of the spectacular ruins and, from the Western Terrace, we had views of the Lake District fells dusted with snow. We spotted roe deer in the woods and found a fantastic ➤

INFORMATION

Discover 26 of Scotland's Jacobite sites

jacobitetrail.co.uk

For all things Jacobite
1745association.org.uk

A museum that relates the history of this Scottish region

westhighlandmuseum.org.uk

History of clan Cameron
clancameronmuseum.co.uk

Home of the Atholl family for over 700 years

blair-castle.co.uk

Guide to this impressive city
edinburgh.org

A city with two AONBs and a World Heritage Site

discovercarlisle.co.uk

The grandest ruins you've probably ever seen
lowthercastle.org

Discover Derby's three museums and more
derbymuseums.org

BELOW CLOCKWISE The ruined tower of Shap Abbey in the Lowther valley; the Processional Frieze in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery; 'Charlie' in Derby Museum and Art Gallery

children's play area. With no youngsters in sight on this chilly mid-week morning we played at being soldiers in the huge wooden castle.

Acrobatic lapwings and noisy oystercatchers flew overhead as we drove the short distance to Shap Abbey, already a ruin in 1745. In the lovely riverside setting the remaining tower rises over an outline of the once monumental abbey.

While we enjoyed a cold spring day, the Jacobites were here in late November, encountering snow over Shap. Without the M6, the army became strung-out over this inhospitable landscape.

The Lancashire plain must have been a relief to the rebels and, reaching Preston, they received an encouraging welcome with cheering crowds and bells. A ball was held in Charlie's honour at The Bull and Royal, attended by local Jacobite families.

Preston is proud of its impressive Flag Square, overlooked by the neo-classical Harris Museum. Inside this museum I found the story of Preston's part in the Jacobite rebellion and a collection of Jacobite tall-stemmed drinking glasses that were used for enthusiastic toasting.

The Jacobites made good progress through Manchester and south through Stockport – and we followed. While Anthony drove, I read out stories about this part of the journey.

Mrs Skyrring, a Stockport woman, sold all her jewellery and enthusiastically handed the money to the charismatic prince who is

described as tall and handsome with clear skin, wearing full Highland dress and a blue waistcoat trimmed with silver.

The reception became frosty as the Jacobites left the northwest. In Macclesfield people turned their backs as the soldiers went through the streets. The good people of Leek were appalled when the army sharpened their swords on the parish church's gravestones.

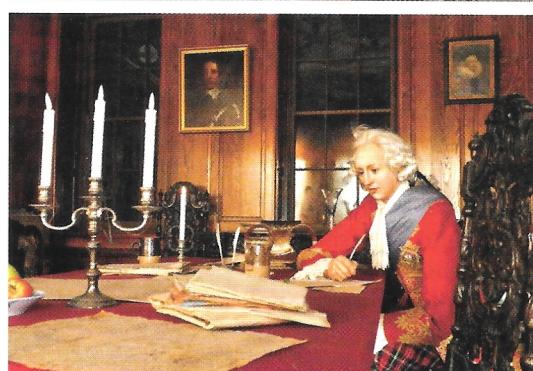
The story of the Jacobite army is generally one of good discipline. However, weary and a long way from home, insubordination increased and fear flourished.

In Mayfield, near Ashbourne, soldiers shot two local men and the terrified villagers barricaded themselves in the church while soldiers fired at the door. I wondered if hope was turning to hostility as I traced the musket ball holes on the wooden door with my fingers.

We hiked some of the waymarked Bonnie Prince Charlie's Walk from Ashbourne to Derby. After a pub lunch in the postcard-pretty village of Osmaston, we followed tracks by the pond and into the woodland of Osmaston Park to Shirley.

By the lake is an old sawmill, built in the style of a chalet; geese were grazing in the fields and chestnut-red pheasants called in the woodland.

Although much of medieval Derby has been demolished, a few gems remain that the Jacobites would have seen when they entered the city in 'tolerable order' in December, 1745 to the playing of bagpipes. ▶



Dressed in dirty plaids, some wearing no shoes, the Jacobites commanded pity rather than fear.

Near the River Derwent I found the half-timbered Dolphin Inn and St Mary's Chapel, a rare medieval bridge chapel. Derby has the only statue to Charlie by the cathedral; the prince sits high on a horse looking young and proud.

In the Derby Museum and Art Gallery, I headed straight for the Bonnie Prince Charlie exhibition. Arriving alone in the mock-up of the room in Exeter House that Charlie stayed in, he sits at a table writing a letter and surrounded by the original panelling. In the quiet of the room a moaning wind began around the candlelit figure and Charlie 'spoke' to me.

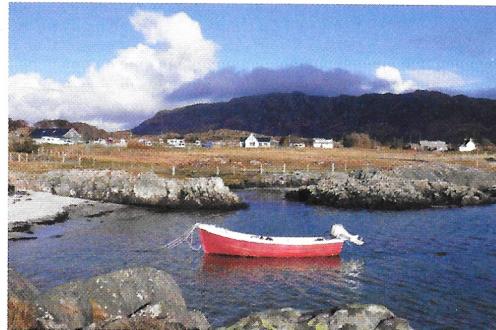
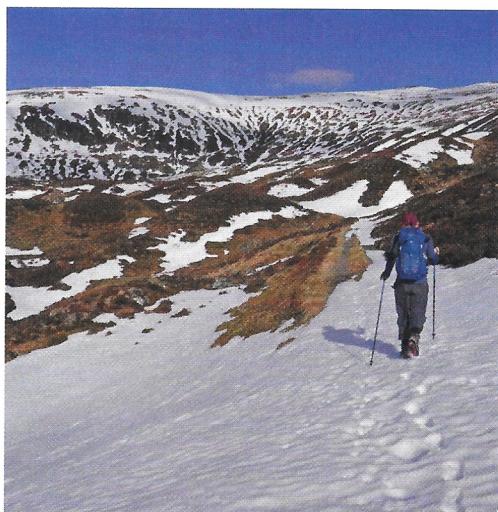
Learning that government troops were approaching and the defence of London mobilised, with insufficient support, no sign of French reinforcements and the risk of becoming surrounded, his commanders advised a retreat.

In that room on 6 December, the Jacobite 'black Friday', Charlie made the difficult decision to return north and he vents his frustration and despair, vowing to take his own counsel in future.

After travelling 500 miles it was in this museum that I truly glimpsed Charlie's motivation. Alone with his words – and forgetting the rights and wrongs of his ambition to the British throne – I connected with a young man who had a dream that was now shattering.

That evening we toasted Charlie, a rebel with a cause, with the only suitable drink. Before he left Scotland Charlie gave the recipe for his personal liqueur, the honey-sweet Drambuie, to the MacKinnon clan in gratitude for their help.

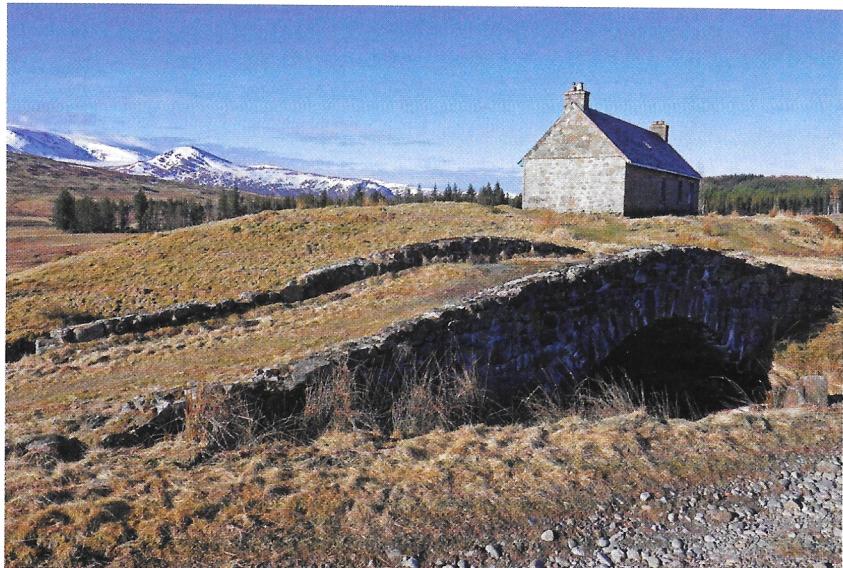
For that and his romantic journey, I say thank you! 



LEFT Sunnyside Croft Touring Site, Arisaig

BELOW The bothy at Melgarve marks the end of the surfaced road on the old route over the Corrieyairack Pass

BELOW LEFT There was still plenty of snow near the summit of the Corrieyairack Pass in early April



WE STAYED AT

Sunnyside Croft Touring Site, Arisaig PH39 4NT

01687 450643
sunnysidetouringsite.co.uk
 23 March – 21 October
 £ Two adults, pitch and electric: £32

Bunroy Park, Roy Bridge, Fort William PH31 4AG

01397 712332
bunroypark.co.uk
 22 March – 31 October
 £ Two adults, pitch and electric: From £20

Invernahavon Caravan Site, Glentruim, By Newtonmore, Inverness-shire PH20 1BE

01540 673534
invernahavon.com
 1 April – 10 October
 £ Two adults, pitch and electric: From £20.50

Crossfells Campsite (Camping and Caravanning Club CS), Crossfells Cottage, Clifton Dykes, Penrith, Cumbria CA10 2DG

07551 339697
crossfalls-campsite.co.uk
 All year
 £ Two adults, pitch and electric: From £14 (members only, but you may join on site)

PREMIER PARK 2019

Blair Castle Caravan Park, Blair Atholl, Perthshire PH18 5SR

01796 481263
blair-castle.co.uk/caravan-estate/
 1 March – 19 November
 £ Two adults, pitch and electric: From £24

The Wheel Caravan Park, Rough Castle Farm, Falkirk FK1 4RR

07872 574164
thewheelcaravanpark.co.uk
 1 January – 15 December
 £ Two adults, pitch and electric: £22

Edinburgh Caravan and Motorhome Club Site, 35-37 Marine Drive, Edinburgh EH4 5EN

01313 126874
caravanclub.co.uk All year
 £ Two adults, pitch and electric: From £20.90

Poplars Farm (Camping and Caravanning Club CS), Hulland Ward, Ashbourne, Derbyshire DE6 3ED

01335 370347
campingandcaravanningclub.co.uk
 All year
 £ Two adults, pitch and electric: From £16 (members only, but you may join on site)