



James, The Old Pretender

Findlay and Murdoch in their chapter entitled 'Revolution to reform' suggest that Scottish political history of the eighteenth century is based on the significance of the aforementioned 'Glorious' Revolution of 1688-89. Much later in the first half of the eighteenth century, the two most tumultuous events for Aberdonians namely, the 1715 and the 1745 Jacobite Rebellions physically challenged the citizens. These insurgencies were a direct result of the deposition of James II (and VII) affording William of Orange his opportunity to seize the British Throne. Aberdeen City Fathers' were also unhappy with the amount of debt that they had built up during the 'troubles'. Numerous marauders blackmailed the Councillors, the city coffers being used to 'persuade' the insurgents of their support for their cause, as the city fathers changed their allegiance in an effort to exercise 'damage limitation'. An incoming army, large or small, meant that their subsistence demands had to be met, sometimes by loans from leading citizens. George Garden, rebel Minister of the East Kirk was dispatched to London to plead political and ecclesiastical concerns on behalf of the Town Council, particularly over the outflow of funds. This was an unexpected choice as Garden had openly refused to pray for King William and Queen Mary, betraying his ardent Jacobite tendencies. When the 'Old Chevalier' landed at Peterhead in December 1715 and despite suffering a heavy influenza, travelled to Aberdeen in disguise as a French Naval Officer, Dr Garden was one of the dissidents that greeted him in Aberdeen. Fenton Wyness in his romantic, congenial style relates, "It was an overcast day with a thick sea haar hanging over the town. Shortly after noon, the small group entered a pend on the north side of the Castlegate for a welcome meal at the house of Alexander Scott a well-known Shipmaster. After a brief rest, the party took the road for Fetteresso Castle. Amongst the clergy were Dr Garden and Dr Andrew Burnett, both of whom had re-occupied their former pulpits in the High Church of Saint



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Nicholas, in honour of their 'Pretender'. James Francis Edward Stuart was there proclaimed James VIII (of Scotland) and III (of England). Loyal addresses were given by Dr Garden, and the Jacobite Provost, Patrick Bannerman received a knighthood."

The 1715 Rebellion was badly organised and predictably disastrous for the Episcopalians. Scared for his safety, the Scots returned James to France uncrowned. Eventually crowned 'King of Scotland' in Rome by the Pope, James died on 1st January, 1766.

*Stuart Donald
from 'Skinner's Legacy' (2004)*

**The coat of arms of James Francis Edward Stuart as Prince of Wales created by Inchcape; and the portrait of James Francis Edward Stuart from Internet sources
Aberdeen Before 1800
Dennison/Ditchburn/Lynch (Tuckwell 2002)
further information from
archives@aberdeen.anglican.org
Aberdeen Diocesan Library & Archives**