

“The Dalilea Manuscript” and associated family papers are now in the West Highland Museum.¹

The MS is entitled “A True and real state of Prince Charles Stuart’s miraculous escape after the Batle of Cullodden”. It was written by John, second son of MacDonald of Borrodale, better known locally as Ian Fraingeach, who accompanied the Prince during the eventful period.² According to a newspaper correspondent of the last century there were two manuscripts — one of which was probably a shorter copy of the original. This source states that the shorter one gives an account of Prince Charles being ferried across Loch Shiel in a dug-out canoe. The original having been given to Sir Evan MacGregor was described then as being lost.³

As the following contains no such reference I can only assume that it is the original which was ultimately returned to the MacDonalds of Dalilea.

According to Mrs. M. Warburton, sister of W. Ronald G. Henderson, a descendent of the Dalilea family, who bequeathed the MS to the West Highland Museum, a copy was sent by the Misses Joanna and Jane MacDonald to Blackwood’s who published it in their Magazine in [October 1873](#). Baron Porcelli in his book [The White Cockade](#) [1949] has used it but does not mention the source.

There is at Dalilea House, in the Possession of Alexander McDonald Esq. late proprietor of Lochshiel the manuscript accompanying this.

This manuscript was written by Mr. McDonald’s grandfather who accompanied Prince Charles Edward in his campaign. He is the John McDonald mentioned by Chambers the historian, as being the youngest son of Angus McDonald of Boisdale under whose roof Prince Charles Edward received his first shelter. John McDonald left the college at Ratisbon and joined the heroic band who followed the fortunes of Prince Charles at Perth. Young John was so like the Prince and so eminently handsome that he was often mistaken for him his foreign dress and accent helping the illusion. When marching on the battle field of Culloden the Catholic priest walked beside him and gave him the sacraments as he did to others of the brave band. He was to have followed Prince Charles to France but while hiding with Sir Lockhart of Carnwarth and McDonald of Clanranald in the Island of Eigg he was seized with fever and left dying. Two poor women who found him lying said regretfully “what a sorrowful thing to think such a beautiful youth would be dead before night”. The agitation this caused him caused his nose to bleed and he

¹ Letters [West Highland Museum](#) Library, Fort William, Moidart.

² Moidart Or Among the Clanranalds, MacDonald, Rev C, Oban, 1889, pp 194-5.

³ Inverness Courier, 3 January, 1861.

recovered rapidly; the Prince left a walking cane behind him with a gold head as a remembrance. John McDonald resided afterwards at [Rhue](#) and married Miss Catherine McDonald of Barisdale a grand-daughter of Glengarrys. The Highlanders used to allow John McDonald his own way in everything as they said he was so clever there was no use in opposing him who after conspiring to overthrow the King compelled that same King to pay up his wife's dowery out of the property he had sequestrated belonging to her father at Knoydart. John McDonald was the most literary of the followers of Prince Charles and was written to by Home the historian for an account of what he furnished him with; but the most valuable and longest of his manuscripts was given to his relative Sir John McGregor Murray and host. The Borrowdales' house at Glenmeddle was the first house knocked down by George's warships his daughter remembered, seeing the soldiers carrying off their flock of geese after killing them she being hiding in the woods, they carried off the cows but the dairymaid pursued them and moved the officer to compassionate the children so far as to allow one cow afterwards called the trooper to return to give milk to the children. The family afterwards hid themselves in a shealing or a house made with wattles or basket work they were roused one morning by seeing a number of guns piercing the basket work and finding themselves surrounded they searched everywhere for the Prince and ordered the ladies and children to follow them however the officer soon returned them. John's mother who was a daughter of the chief of Clan McGregor of Glengyle in attempting to fly from Borrowdale was seized by the soldiers and the wedding ring torn off her finger.

[The Edinburgh monthly magazine \[afterwards\] Blackwood's Edinburgh ...](#), Volume 114 [page 411](#)

Copy of the proceeding Narrative. A true and real state of Prince Charles Stuart's miraculous escape after the battle of Cullodden.

When the Prince at the battle of Cullodden perceived that the horse he rode was wounded and any stand he and his small band could make was needless, he made off accompanied by two Irishmen, Mr. Sullivan and Neil, his Aide de Camps and a few more, and took little or no rest, till they arrived at Glenbiestle in Araisaig, which is a pendicle belonging to the farm of Borradale, being the place he first landed in the continent at his arrival. He rested there three nights before a sufficient boat belonging to John McDonald, son to old Borradale, was procured to transport him to the long Island of Uist, in view to get some vessel at Stornoway to carry him to France, and for that purpose sent the Mr. Sullivan, his Aide de Camp, to Stornoway, where he found one but would not wait the Prince's coming, therefore made off with himself and landed safe in France. He being in this manner disappointed, thought proper to risk his person in the hands of Clanranald's people in South Uist, who gave him all the aid and assistance in their power, till such time the country was surrounded by his enemies, then clearly perceiving the impossibility of escaping he was advised to go to Clanranald House in Benbecula, twenty-five miles from the place he then was at and endeavour to ferry to the Isle of Iley, accompanied by the then Miss

Flory MacDonald, and lie under the name of Miss Betty Burk, and her servant maid effected their escape and arrived safe at Kingsbrough in Troterness, part of Lord McDonald's estate. There Miss Flory McDonald parted with him. After some rest there he proceeded to McLeod of Rasa's family, where he was received with the greatest kindness and friendship; after one night's rest there he was sent under the care of Malcolm McLeod to the care of one John McKinon, alias John McKorie or Lachlen in McKinon's Estate who next night conveyed him to the Laird of Moror's farm in the Mainland and he begged of Moror to send a sure guide with him to his faithful old Landlord (this is what he always called my father) to Borrakil; after his arrival there the old gentleman and his two sons Ronald and I received him with all the marks of friendship and respect and gave our word of honour that we would use our uttermost to save him in spite of all his enemies, and that we depended on Divine Providence that He would grant him and us health strength and vigour to endure all the fatigue and hardship necessary for that purpose. As the Prince at all times entertained the greatest regard for Mr. McDonald's, of Glenaladil's, integrity and capacity in aiding him so far as in his power, he ordered me to go directly to him and acquaint him of his present situation, and hoped he would meet him and his present small company in the woods of Borrakil next night.

After Glenaladil considered the message he looked upon it exceeding hard to depart from his wife and five pretty weak children and his great stock of cattle were before then taken away by the enemy and having received three bad wounds at Cullodden of which one of them was not then fully cured. Notwithstanding these considerations he dispised them and thought it his duty to grant all the aid and assistance in his power to save a poor distressed Prince notwithstanding of the great temptation of Thirty Thousand Pound Sterling promised by the Government to any that would deliver him up. Though Glenaladil and his old uncle Borrakil with his children were in the greatest distress for want of any support at the time two nights thereafter he appeared at the place appointed with the above party; they proceeded the next morning to McLeod's cave upon a high precipice in the woods of Borrakil, where they all deliberated what steps they would take for their safety. Few days after they visibly saw the whole Coast surrounded by ships of war and tenders as also the country by other military forces, then it was determined to use all efforts to depart out of the country, and began their march that very night and came the length of the braes of Morar, where the old gentleman Borrakil and his son Ronald took their leave of him. The Prince then accompanied only by Glenaladil and his brother John and I made straight for the braes of Glenfinen, which is part of Glenaladil's estate; to our great surprise we found that place surrounded by three hundred of the enemy. Then we came to a resolution to depart the country for some time and for that purpose sent an express to Donald Cameron, Glenpean, an aged gentleman, to meet us at Corrou, in the braes of Morar, which accordingly he did; we proceeded under night till sunrise next morning to the top of a high mountain laying between Loch Askeig and Loch Morar head a camp of the enemy laying on each side of us and two different camps of the military before us; in the course of three nights we passed by four camps and twenty-five patrols and some so nigh us that we heard them frequently speaking, without any food further than a small slice of salt cheese and abundance of water.

The third morning we arrived near the top of a high mountain near Loch Hourne and found there a bit hollow ground covered with long heather and branches of young birch bushes, where we all five of us lay down to rest almost fainting for want of food. These severe trials and circumstances drew many heavy sighs from his poor oppressed heart. I informed him then that I had a leepy (a Scots measure) of groaten meal wrapt up in a napkin in my pocket, which, when I produced, made a vast alteration on the countenance of the whole of them; come, come, says he, let us in God's name have a share, never was people in more need. I expected soon to meet with plenty so I divided the whole of it between us five and they began to chat and crack heartily after our refreshment. We perceived forty of the military with a Captain as their commander laying at the foot of the mountain all this time. We saw them visibly all along but durst not move till dark night for fear of being discovered. Proceeded then on our journey to the braes of Glenshiel, the darkest ever in my life I travelled and arrived within a mile of it by sunrise, quite exhausted with hunger and fatigue. Glenaladil and I were then sent to the village in view to procure some provisions, and bought a stone of cheese and a half stone of butter, as we could get nothing else, immediately returned back where we left him, Donald Cameron and Glenaladil's brother. Words cannot express the quantity we consumed of the butter and cheese at the time though both kind exceeding salt; we met that day with one Donald McDonald, a Glengarry lad, with whom we agreed to be our guide further north, as Donald Cameron returned after his refreshment to look after his own family, and we passed the whole day, which was exceeding hot, in the face of a mountain above a river that ran through Glensheil. We were all seized with such a drooth that we were all like to perish before sunset. He would not allow any of us to move for water, though we might have been provided within forty yards to us, so cautious he was; at sunset we all went staggering to the river side and drank water at no allowance; at same time we saw a boy coming towards us at some distance. Glenaladil and I went to meet him. This was a son of the honest McKra that furnished us with provision in the morning whom his father sent with five Scots pints of goat milk for our relief. Glenaladil who had all our bank in a purse hanging before him gave the boy four shillings sterling, and in the hurry we were in, he happened to drop his purse on the ground till he got his plaid kilted on him and then we bade farewell to the boy and returned in great haste to our small party who partook liberally of the milk then proceeded an English mile before we missed the purse, in which was a keeping forty Luisdors and five shillings in silver, which was all we had to depend upon for our subsistence; it was determined that Glen and I was to return in search of our small stock; found the purse and five shillings in it on the spot we left in and none of the gold; proceeded then about midnight to the boy's lather's house, who at the time was sound sleeping, called him out I fairly told him what happened without a minute's delay he returned to the house got hold of a rope hanging there and gripped his son by the arm in great passion and addressed him in the following words "you damned scoundrel, this instant get these poor gentlemen's money which I am certain is all they have to depend upon or by the heavens I'll hang you to that very tree you see this moment." The boy shivering with fear went instantly for the money which he had buried under ground about thirty yards from his father's house. During the time Glen and I spent about recovering our small funds the Prince and the two

persons we left with him saw on the other side of Shiels river an officer to appearance and three men with him, our small party hid themselves by favour of some bushes at the river side, but they were convinced they could not miss to meet Glenaladil and me and the consequence would be a squabble between us though he positively refused to inform us of the danger of meeting them by one of them that was along with him the night being quite clear and a serene sky notwithstanding our passing by one another on each side of the river, neither of us observed the other nor can I account for it.

Then we proceeded all night through these moors till ten of the clock next morning, stopped there till the evening again without meeting with any particular accidents excepting hearing some firing of guns not at a very great distance. The evening being very calm and warm we greatly suffered by midges a species of little creatures troublesome and numerous in the Highlands; to preserve him from such troublesome guests we wrapt him head and feet in his plaid and covered him with long heather that naturally grew about a bit hollow ground; we laid him after leaving him in that posture he uttered several heavy sighs and groans. We planted ourselves about the best we could. Finding there nothing by appearance to disturb us or enemy in our way we proceeded on and next night arrived in the braes of Glenmorrison, called the Corrichido. Perceived three or four small huts in the strath of the Corry. It was then determined upon by us to send Glenaladil's brothers down to them to know what they were and when he understood them to be all McDonalds and friends to the cause, except Patrick Grant Crosky, who was with them and equally a friend to the cause, he addressed one of them called John McDonald alias McGoule, vie Ian dui, to go with a cogfull of milk to Mr. McDonald of Glenaladil and McDonald of Greenfield, which latter was not there at the same time; he instantly complied with his request, but to his greatest surprise at the distance of nine yards from us he knew the Prince to be there, his head being covered with a white night cap and an old bonnet above; at this unexpected sight the poor man changed colours and turned as red as blood, and addressed him in the following manner "I am sorry to see you in such a poor state and hope if I live, to see you yet in a better condition, as I have seen you before at the head of your army, upon the Green of Glasgow. All that I can do is to continue faithful to you while I live and am willing to leave my wife and children and follow you wherever you incline going"; after all this discourse was explained to the Prince he said, taking him cheerfully by the hand "As you are a McDonald whom I always found faithful to my cause, I shall admit you to my small partie and trust myself to you and if ever it should be my lot to enjoy my own, you may depend upon of being equally rewarded". One thing I beg leave to observe to you, says he, there is one large stone in the Strath of this Corry near these huts you see under that stone forty men can accommodate themselves and the best water in the Highlands runs through it, and a large void heather bed in it already made for your reception. I have a three year old stote I may slaughter for provision till such time you refresh yourself and your partie. There are four more neighbours and countrymen with me as trusty as I can furnish us from the neighbouring country's necessaries of life as can be expected in such distressed time. His advice was so agreeable that we all agreed to it without hesitation and marched all with cheerfulness in our countenance to this new and unexpected mansion and

found ourselves as comfortably lodged as we had been in a royal palace. The other four men mentioned above came in and after a short discourse gave all cheerfully the oath of allegiance, after which they brought the stote and killed him, we then feasted and lived there plentifully for three days and nights till we found ourselves in danger by one whom they generally styled the black Campbell, who had a party of militia within six miles of the place he was in, in that event we thought advisable to proceed to the Chisholms firwoods where we and our whole party spent near a month in peace and plenty, at the root of one large tree, we built for the Prince Glenaladil and me one teal of firr branches, at the other side of the tree another one of a larger size, two of our party were always employed in providing provisions, other two as outposts enquiring for information one honest tennant of the name of Chisholm at the distance of a few miles from us afforded us with meal butter and cheese and flesh weekly, neither did we want aqua vitae and tobacco which commodity we all made use of, nothing particular happened to us during our stay here.

But the Prince anxious to find out Cameron of Lochiel insisted upon our return towards that part of his Estate called Locharkeig; after a day or twos march passed by the brays of Glenmorrison and arriving to the brays of Glengarry about nightfall; the river Garry swelled to such a degree that we thought it impassable; he still positively insisted upon giving it a trial, which we did and with the greatest difficulty at the hasard of our lives succeeded the night being very dark rested near the banks of the river wet and cold; next day passed through Glenkeinie and stopped at a broken shelhouse above Auchnasaul. We then were out of provisions we sent two of our party to repair a small hut wherein Lochiel scolked for some lime but observing a deer at the end of the hut shot both at him at once and killed him (one of them returned to us with their most agreeable news) when we all in a body steered our course and employed the whole night in dressing for him and ourselves part of the venison.

Next day we sent for Mr. Cameron of Clunes and after passing two nights together went to Torvullen opposite to Achnacarrie Lochiel's principal place of residence once killed a good highland cow then Dr. Cameron and two french officers that landed some time before that in Pollew in Ross-shire came to us and Mr. Cameron of Clunes and after passing two nights there they came to the followeing resolution viz. that the Prince accompanied by Dr. Cameron, Glenaladil, the two french officers, with a few more should be conveyed to Lochiel and that I should return to the west coast and if any frigate from France should appear for the purpose of carrying him I to go aboard till he could be found dead or alive and that Glenaladil is the person to be employed for procuring him, the Glenmorrison lads to return home with his promise if ever in his power, he would make satisfaction for their losses and gratitude so that very night I and John Glenaladils brother made off for the west coast and arrived there two days after and found all left behind us in the greatest distress for want of all necessaries of life or houses to shelter us from the inclemmency of the weather.

A fortnight thereafter in September two frigates appeared coming to the harbour at Borrodil under English colours; my Father and brother Ronald and I immediately had recourse to the

mairs to avoid being apprehended and appointed one Donald McDonald in whom we had great confidence to wait their landing and after night fall twelve French with two officers at their head came to a small hut we repaired some time before that for our own reception as all our houses before that were burned; the names of the officers were young Sherridan and Capt. O'Neil who at their arrival enquired for us all as they know us well formerly and wished much to have some discourse of consequence with us.- Upon our being informed of this we appeared and after a long conversation were convinced of their sincerity and obliged them to produce their credentials from France before we revealed any part of our secrets to them.

Next day I went aboard one of the frigates and my brother accompanied by the two french officers went to Glenaladil to acquaint him of their errand. After a night's rest they were desired by Glenaladil to return to their ships and that he would go in search of the person they wanted which he accordingly did and in eight days returned with him to Borrakil where he first landed and after refreshing himself well directly went aboard and left us all in a worse state than he found us. Lochiel, his brother Dr. Cameron, John Roy Stuart the two first mentioned French officers with one hundred more persons of some distinction, accompanied and took their passage along with him, he then seemed to be in good spirit and addressed himself to such as stayed behind to live in good hopes and that he expected to see us soon with such a force as would enable him to re-imburse us for our losses and troubles so that he ended as he began.-

One material circumstance I cannot omit acquainting you of that is the battle fought between three British frigates and two french ones on the third of May after Culloden battle. The French frigate landed the latter end of April forty thousand Louisdors with some stand of arms and ammunition at the farm of Borrakil; government being informed of the same despatched three of their own frigates to the place mentioned in order to capture the French men present Lord Howe then Capt. of the Greyhound and frigate was commodore of that small squadron; they appeared in sight about four in the morning by the point of Ardnamurchan from whence they then visibly saw the french frigate. They were favoured with a favourable wind directly after them and before the French had time to rise their anchors, Capt. Howe clipped in between the two French frigates and gave a broadside to each of them with very great execution. The largest of the French frigates was disabled by breaking the rudder and was obliged to lay by till seven o'clock in the afternoon and the small French frigate after several attempts of boarding her fairly escaped till then and when soon the largest of them repaired the damage went to her assistance Capt. Howe having run out of ammunition sheered off about nightfall and the French pursued them for a league when they thought advisable to return to their former situation.- At two o'clock next morning they sheered away from Borrakil with a fair wind the Duke of Perth and several other gentlemen such as Lord John Drummond Lochard of Carnwath and many more took their passage to France.- The battle lasted twelve hours and we found on our shores fifteen Frenchmen dead not one Englishman in the number as they threw none overboard of them till they came the length of the point of Ardnamurchan. After that the gold was by a party conveyed to Lochaber

and part of the arms by orders of Secretary Morrow, were then determined to gather and rendezvous their friends and well wishers which never happened since nor by all appearance will.

APPENDIX I

JOHN MACDONALD'S NARRATIVE⁴

The following story forms a fitting supplement to Glenaladale's Narrative (vol. i. p. 333). It is reprinted, by the permission of Messrs. Blackwood, from *Blackwood's Magazine*, October 1873. Mr. Skene's letter, which introduces the narrative, is here included, but the editorial comments are not reprinted.

[EDINBURGH, *September 9*, 1873.]

SIR,—The Manuscript narrative of the escape of Prince Charles Stuart, by John Macdonald, one of his companions, of which a copy follows, is the property of the Misses Macdonald of Dalilea, grand-daughters of the author, and was intrusted to me by them. I have transcribed the MS. carefully, *verbatim et literatim*, and have merely added an introduction and conclusion, partly from information I already possessed, and partly from that furnished to me by the family. Of the authenticity of the MS. itself I have not the shadow of a doubt. The appearance of the original MS., which was in my hands for some time, carries truth in its face, and I know that it has been in the possession of the author's descendants from his death to the present time, having been always prized by them as an interesting family relic.—I am, Sir, yours faithfully, *To the Editor of "Blackwood."* George Skene.]

⁴ This John MacDonald was the youngest son of Angus MacDonald of Boradale. He had been sent to be educated at the Scots College, Ratisbon, but returned to join Prince Charles, and served during the campaign as lieutenant in Clanranald's regiment. See vol. I. p. 333.—ED.