

The Jacobites

The Latin for the English name James is Iacobus/Jacobus.

'Jacobites' is the name given to those who believed James II of England/ James VII of Scotland was the rightful Roman Catholic Stuart monarch and that his dynasty should be restored in the British Isles.

Background

Charles I was executed in 1649 and the monarchy replaced with the Commonwealth; headed by Oliver Cromwell.

Charles I left two sons. The future Charles II and the future James II (of England / VII of Scotland).

Charles II converted to Catholicism on his deathbed in 1685.

James II succeeded him. His wife was Mary of Modena. The birth of a son in 1688 meant he now had a male heir who was being raised as a Roman Catholic. James had two older daughters, Mary and Anne, who had been raised as Protestants. It had been assumed that there would be no more children and that his elder daughter Mary would succeed James. Now under the laws of Primogeniture there was the potential for a Catholic dynasty to be established. This affected how James was viewed as a monarch.

James had sought changes which many in Parliament believed would lead to the restoration of a Roman Catholic monarchy.

The English Parliament invited James' son-in-law, husband of his daughter Mary, William Prince of Orange (Dutch Protestant), to enter the country and subsequently he was offered the throne, ruling jointly as William III with his wife Mary II. This was to ensure a Protestant succession. It is known as the Glorious Revolution.

Support for James was not strong. Defections grew and James realised he did not command the loyalty of his 'subjects'. Ultimately James was 'allowed' to flee to France.

The Jacobite cause was not simply one attractive to Roman Catholics (The Old Faith). Scottish support was very mixed, often included Protestants and was sometimes linked to clan rivalry.

In England support was regional and the NW was a key area. Many leading landowning families had continued to practise Catholicism.

Uprisings took place in Scotland, Ireland and England at various times from 1689. A planned invasion by France in 1708, with Jacobite support in Scotland ready to join, was thwarted. The French fleet carried James II's son James Francis Edward Stuart but did not land. He is known as the 'Old Pretender'

In 1714 a new dynasty, the Hanoverians, was established in Britain. Discussions had taken place with the Old Pretender but he refused to convert to Anglicanism. There was no political support for a Stuart restoration but there was popular anti-German sentiment.

In 1715 a major Jacobite effort was launched on a number of fronts. A Jacobite army of 4,000 reached Preston. The battle of Preston was the last battle fought on English soil. Despite losing more men in the fighting the Hanoverian forces were victorious. Many of the

defeated were English. The Old Pretender arrived after the cause was already lost and in 1716 he fled to Europe, never to return.

A Spanish-supported uprising took place in Scotland in 1719.

In 1745 the last major uprising took place. By then the Stuart dynasty was represented by Charles Edward Stuart (Bonny Prince Charlie/ The Young Pretender).

The Jacobite cause had become a focus for various groups who were unhappy with aspects of the Hanoverian rule. But these groups were disparate. In Scotland many were Protestants and in England Tory and Whig rivalries were key issues. In practice discontent with the Hanoverians did not translate into popular support for a revival of a Stuart dynasty.

The Scottish army moved south through Carlisle and Preston on the way to Derby. The Jacobites expected a French invasion force to join them and that many in NW England would still be loyal to Jacobitism. In fact, the numbers in England joining the Jacobite forces were small and the French never arrived. The Jacobite forces fled north again.

Following the rout at the Battle of Culloden Charles Edward Stuart left Scotland for France for the last time.