

WAS ROBERT BURNS A JACOBITE ?

Introduction

The term Jacobite was first used to indicate a follower of James II(VII), the king who, in 1688, fled from the British throne to join his wife and his infant son, James, in the safety of France. The king had lost most of his support by his unstinting efforts to restore Roman Catholicism as the principal religion of the country. The people were now in rebellion and the 'Glorious Revolution' had begun. The Jacobite name was later applied to those who gave their allegiance to those of King James's descendants who sought to replace the appointed monarchs who succeeded him.

To follow James II(VII), the parliament issued a call to Mary, his eldest daughter and her husband, William, Duke of Orange, that they would become joint rulers. They were protestant and related as cousins, she a grand-daughter and he a grandson of Charles I. Both therefore were descendants of the House of Stuart royal line. Their tenure of the throne was short, however, and they died without leaving an heir.

The throne then came to another Stuart, Anne, second daughter of James II(VII), sister of the late Queen Mary and also protestant. The future succession, at this time, was pre-determined and when Anne the last of the Stuarts to reign, died in 1714 with no surviving heir, the throne was to go to the grand-daughter of James I(VI), Sophia, who was married to the Elector of Hanover. Sophia was a niece of Charles I and cousin of Charles II and James II(VII). Even this prepared plan of succession failed, however, as Sophia died a few weeks before Anne. The result then was that the first member of the House of Hanover to sit on the British throne was Sophia's son, who was crowned as George I.

The Bill of Rights of 1689 and the Succession Law of 1701 prevented a Roman Catholic from becoming sovereign but there was strong Jacobite opposition leading to numerous acts of violence until the middle of the 18th century. In addition to the domestic support, encouragement for the Jacobites came through the action of several European monarchs and the Pope by declaring recognition of King James III(VIII) – the son of James II(VII) - as the rightful monarch instead of George.

Violence developed into warfare with the rebellions of 1715, led by the would-be-king James III(VIII) and 1745, led by Prince Charlie, while the arrival at other times of ineffective French and Spanish fleets made shows of token support. The defeat at Culloden in 1746 brought an end to significant Jacobite efforts to regain the throne from the Hanovers.

Jacobite sympathy remained, however, lingering throughout Britain for the remainder of the 18th Century. Even in the 19th Century it still survived in local clubs and associations, notably in parts of the English northwest, in North Wales and in pockets in the Scottish Highlands and it wasn't until the early 20th Century, during the Great War (1914 -18) that all such Jacobite presence was considered to have ended (Encyclopedia Britannica).

The Burness (or Burnes)Family

The known history of the family is not very deep. Though there was an earlier tie to Argyll the best established records begin in the 17th Century in Kincardineshire, in the east of Scotland, between Dundee and Aberdeen. It was Walter Burness, the great-great-grandfather of the Poet who came to the east from Argyll to settle there and farm on leased Stuart land.

A short distance from Stonehaven, Walter's family, including the Poet's great-grandfather, James Burness, took leases on other nearby farms also located on Stuart land. James's family added further property to the family's holding in the area and among those was the Poet's grandfather and namesake, Robert. This Robert was very successful and among other things is remembered for donating funds for the building of a school in the nearby village of Dunottar. There his three sons, James, Robert and William (who was to become the Poet's father) received a relatively good education. In Robert's family were also three girls, Agnes, Jean and Isobel, the Poet's aunts.

While the claims have not been clearly verified, the Poet acknowledges his forefathers were Jacobites and is recorded as saying that his Grandfather served in the rebel army of 1715 while several biographers have stated that at least William was in the army of the Bonnie Prince in 1745. Whatever is correct it seems more than coincidental that there was a sudden turn of events that saw grandfather Robert's assets rapidly decline in the two years immediately following Culloden to the point that he had to surrender the lease of his farm and have his sons scatter.

James headed for Montrose where he and his family remained. His son James corresponded with the Poet and at least on one occasion they met. The second son, Robert headed for Edinburgh where he worked as a stonemason, then spent some time in Northern England before returning to live in Ayrshire. William also settled initially in Edinburgh, as a gardener. He worked notably on the laying out of the gardens in the Meadows Park in the City. After a few years William took the job of chief gardener on an estate in Ayrshire. Later he established a small market garden in Alloway for himself.

William built a cottage in Alloway, just south of Ayr, and it was there he took his wife Agnes Brown when they married in 1757 and there in 1759 that the Poet was born. Throughout his life William kept up correspondence with his family in Kincardineshire, and had some contact with his brother Robert.

While most of the correspondence we are familiar with is either to, or from the Poet, his younger brother, Gilbert, kept up correspondence with John Caird, who was a cousin of their father, William. It was on his way back from his visit to the Highlands that the Poet met with his cousin James, from Montrose, and his aunts and other relatives who still were living in Kincardineshire.

Robert Burns, the man

Robert Burns was an extremely passionate and complicated man. On a day he could form an impassioned opinion of a person, subject or point of view and then some days later offer alternative opinions just as

passionately. It seems too that he saw no particular incompatibility arising from many of these differing opinions. For example-

By age 17 he was rather well-educated (thought to be in top10% of his age peers) but worked much of his life as a ploughman.

He considered himself an ordinary man but was still comfortable with the gentry of Edinburgh.

He claimed humility yet was proud to be considered famous.

He was a royalist though not particularly fond of many of that ilk, and he had republican thoughts, especially in matters of the American and French Revolutions and in the brotherhood of man.

He was a pacifist (“ ...it is the law”), but he called for war and bloody vengeance, particularly against oppression.

He declared himself a Whig, but on at least one occasion, in 1790, he campaigned for and voted for a Tory.

He considered himself honest; he was honest, but not always.

He favoured the Scots tongue, but some of his best songs are in English.

He grew up with English as the language of the household and he corresponded in English; he wrote his poems and songs in both Scots and English; he was a Scot and it seems he mostly thought and spoke in Scots.

He lived life to the fullest but he had solitary periods of deep depression.

He appears to have had a strong faith but ridiculed the poor conduct of many of the church's representatives.

As a lover, often he declared himself faithful unto death, but he wasn't.

He was born Burness (his father's surname was Burnes) and died Burns.

He wrote sympathetic verse esteeming the Jacobites and verses mocking the Whigs, while declaring in a letter to Mrs Dunlop that he was a whig himself. In his actions and employment he was loyal to the reigning king.

None of the above is to criticize the Poet but rather to illustrate the complexity of his nature and to show the difficulty of determining from his writings a clear answer to the question – Was Robert Burns a Jacobite ?

Burns' Writings

There are very few references of a political nature in the entire library of Burns' letters. Notably, letter CXXII to the Editor of the STAR daily newspaper in November 1788 is a spirited objection to an article which had appeared in the paper in which reference was made to “...the bloody and tyrannical House of Stuart”.

To Mrs Dunlop, one of his favourite correspondents, he declares in letter CXL dated May 1789 that he is a supporter of the “buff and the

blue”, colours of the Whig party. Generally speaking the Jacobite supporters were mostly Tories and the Government supporters were mostly the Whigs. Both names come from the Gaelic and are very disparaging. *Tory* comes from the Irish indicating a papist outlaw while *Whig* is a term used in driving cattle and came to be directed at Presbyterian rebels and anti-papists. Among the Whigs were also some republicans. Throughout the 18th century the parties were often more clearly identified by association with individuals than by policies .

Lastly, to Alex Cunningham in CLXXXII dated March 1791 he wrote “You must know a beautiful Jacobite piece 'There'll never be peace 'til Jamie comes hame'. When political combustion ceases to be the object of Princes and patriots it then, you know, becomes the lawful prey of historians and poets”. He was carefully cautious even with a friend.

A number of Burns' poems are letters in verse and it is in those that he really exposes his feelings though, considering earlier notes on his readiness to write from contradictory positions, it is necessary to be cautious in deciding which is from the real Burns and whether he has actually shown he finds a rationality in either state.

He appears to associate the Jacobite cause with the fuller right to the throne, historically, and recognizes that a substantial amount of its support comes from the Highlanders for whom he has only hesitant approval, while many of the remaining supporters come from the conservative, rural population and landed gentry, notably in Aberdeenshire and Kincardineshire where some areas had higher numbers of Roman Catholics and Anglicans.

When addressing the Whig position he accepts that they ultimately, though not always, defeated the Jacobites in the field and that they supported the party in power which is presenting stable government under which the people are generally thriving. But he sees the new regime as being no better than the one that was removed.

Some of the related poems are light and humorous with only casual reference to royal or political matters, while others are biting satire. Sometimes the tone is conciliatory and pacifist, more often it is highly partisan and even warlike . Most were published for the first time posthumously which explains the lack of contemporary criticism. He surely didn't write them just for his own amusement . Then who was to be reading them ? Were his real feelings just being laid down for posterity ?

Poems related to the Jacobite cause

193.49 Address to Edinburgh

With awe-struck thought and pitying tears, I view that stately dome,
Where Scotia's kings of other years, Fam'd heroes ! Had their royal home.
Alas ! How changed the times to come, Their noble name low in the dust.
Their hapless race wild-wand'ring roam, Though rigid law cries out
“'Twas just”.

James II(VII) fled to France; his son James, the “Old Pretender” grew up there but later lived in Italy where later his sons Charles and Henry were born.All of them spent much time “roaming” round Europe.

203.1 Address to William Tytler of WoodhouseLee

Revered defender of beauteous Stuart,
Of Stuart, a name once respected -
A name which to love was the mark of a true heart,
But now 'tis despised and neglected.

Tho' something like moisture conglobes in my eye,
Let no one misdeem me disloyal,
A poor friendless wand'rer may well claim a sigh,
Still more if that wand'rer was royal.

My fathers that name have rever'd on a throne,
My fathers have died to right it;
Those fathers would shun their degenerate son,
That name should he scoffingly slight it.

Still in prayers for King George I most heartily join,
The Queen and the rest of the gentry;
Be they wise, be they foolish, is nothing of mine;
Their title's avowed by my country.

But why of that epocha make such a fuss,
That gave us the Hanover line ?
If bringing them over was lucky for us,
I'm sure 'twas as lucky for them.

But loyalty, truce! We're on dangerous ground,
Who knows how the fashion may alter ?
The doctrine today that is loyalty sound,
Tomorrow may bring us a halter !

Tytler was a strong Jacobite. Burns told him to burn Verse 5 after reading. He didn't. Tytler wrote a volume on *An Enquiry into the Evidence Against Mary, Queen of Scots*. His son, James, was the first hot-air balloonist in Scotland. He wrote *A list of the Ladies of Pleasure in Edinburgh*, now out of print and, as already noted by others, out of date.

206.2 Epigram at Inverary

Whoe'er it be that sojourns here,
I pity much his case,
Unless he comes to wait upon
The Lord, *their* God- his Grace

There's naething here but Highland pride,
And Highland scab and hunger;
If Providence has sent me here,
'Twas surely in an anger.

With Willie Nicol, Burns visited Argyll. At their inn they got poor service as all attention was on the Duke's guests. Burns showed very little liking for the Highlander or his ways.

209.3 Written on a Window in Stirling

Here Stuarts once in glory reigned,
And laws for Scotland's weal ordained;
But now unroofed their palace stands,
Their sceptre's fall'n tae other hands;
Fallen indeed, and to the earth,
Whence grovelling reptiles take their birth.
The injur'd Stuart line is gone,
A race outlandish fills their throne -
An idiot race, to honour lost,
Who know them best despise them most.

On seeing the ruins of the Royal Palace at Stirling.

213.4 Epigram on Parting

When Death's dark stream I ferry o'er -
A time that surely shall come -
In Heaven itself I'll ask no more
Than just a Highland welcome.

Ancontrast to his Inverary piece, 206.2; here a Duke's hospitality is appreciated.

215.5 The Bonnie Lass of Albany

Hy heart is wae and unco wae
To think upon the raging sea,
That roars between her gardens green
and the bonnie Lass of Albany.

This lovely maid's of royal blood
That ruled Albion's kingdoms three;
But oh, alas ! For her bonnie face,
They hae wrang'd the Lass of Albany

In the rolling tide of spreading Clyde,
There sits an isle of high degree,
And a town of fame whose princely name
Should grace the Lass of Albany.

But there's a youth, a witless youth,
That fills the place where she should be;
We'll send him o'er to his native shore
And bring our ain sweet Albany.

Alas the day and woe the day,
A false usurper wan the gree,
Who now commands the towers and lands -
The royal right of Albany.

We'll daily pray, we'll nightly pray,
On bended knees most fervently,
That the time may come, with pipe and drum,
We'll welcome hame fair Albany.

Albany is an old term for the portion of Scotland North of the Clyde and the Forth. Prince Charlie assumed himself the title Count of Albany and his wife, Louise, was the Countess. Charles had an illegitimate daughter, Charlotte, with his long-time mistress Clementina Walkinshaw. When Louise left him, Clementina moved in and Charlotte Stuart by dispensation was legitimised. Charles designated his daughter as the Duchess of Albany and his heir to the throne of Britain. She lived in Italy essentially all her life. Her father died in 1788 and she died only a year and a half later. When Charles died his brother Cardinal Henry of York made a weak and futile attempt to claim the rights to the throne. Charlotte did not.

The town of fame in the poem is Rothesay. Duke of Rothesay is a title held by the Prince of Wales who at that time was Prince George, later to become George IV.

Our present Prince of Wales is currently the Duke of Rothesay and Camilla is the Duchess.

219.6 A Birthday Ode for the 31st of December

Afar the illustrious exile roams,
Whom kingdoms on this day should hail;
An inmate in the casual shed,
On transient pity's bounty fed;
Haunted by busy memory's bitter tale !
Beasts of the forest have their savage homes,
But he who should imperial purple wear,
Owns not the lap of earth where rests his royal head.

.....
So Vengeance' arm, ensanguined strong,
Shall with resistless might assail,
Usurping Brunswick's pride shall lay,
And Stuart's wrong and yours, with tenfold weight repay.

Perdition, baleful child of night,
Rise and revenge the injured right
Of Stuart's royal race;
Lead on the unmuzzled hounds of Hell,
Till all the frightened echoes tell
The blood-notes of the chase !

.....
See Brunswick spent, a wretched prey,
His life one poor despairing day
Where each avenging hour ushers in a worse.

.....
The 31st of December was the birthday of Prince Charlie and Burns wrote this as an ode to him in 1787. The Prince died a month later.

229.7 The Chevalier's Lament

The small birds rejoice in the green leaves returning,
The murmuring streamlet runs clear through the vale;
The primroses blow in the dews of the morning,
And wild scatter'd cowslips bedeck the green dale:
But what can give pleasure , or what can seem fair,

While the hungering moments are numbered by care ?
No flow'rs fairly springing or birds sweetly singing,
Can soothe the sad bosom of joyless despair.

The deed that I dared, could it merit their malice -
A king and a father to place on his throne ?
His right are these hills and his right are these valleys,
Where the wild beasts find shelter but I can find none:
But 'tis not my suff'rings thus wretched, forlorn;
My brave gallant friends ! 'tis your ruin I mourn;
Your faith proved so loyal in hot bloody trial -
Alas I can make it no better return.

Imagined expression of gratitude and regret by the Prince to his followers.

239.8 I Reign in Jeannie's Bosom

Louis, what reck I by thee, Or Geordie on his ocean ?
Dyvor beggar louns to me - I reign in Jeannie's bosom.

Let her crown my love her law, And in her breast enthrone me;
Kings and nations – swith awa' ! Reif randies, I disown ye !

Louis of France and George of Britain are bankrupt (dyvor)
Swith awa'! = away with you ! Robber ruffians.....!

259.13 Carl, an the King Come

Carl, an the King come,
Carl, an the King come,
Thou shalt dance and I will sing,
Carl, an the King come.

An somebodie were come again,
Then somebodie maun cross the main,
And every man shall hae his ain,
Carl, an the King come.

I trow we swappè'd for the worse,
We gae the boot the better horse,
An' that we'll tell them at the cross,
Carl, an the King come.

Coggie, an the King come,
Coggie, an the King come,
I'se be fou an' thou'se be toom,
Coggie, an the King come.

“Man, if Charlie was to come back, we'd dance and sing. Surely we got the worse of the change by kicking out the better king. And to my jug I'll say, I'll be full and you'll be empty.”

267.14 The Battle of Sherramuir (Sheriffmuir, 1715)

In sixty lines Burns gives an account of this battle which had ended with both sides claiming a victory though part of both armies fled. This story is critical of both sides but ends with...

Now wad ye sing this double flight,
Some fell for wrang, some fell for right;
But monie bade the world guid-night;
Say pell and mell, wi' muskets knell,
How Tories fell and Whigs to Hell
Flew off in frightened bands, man.

269.15 Killiecrankie

A short piece with some notes on the battle of 1689 where Graham of Claverhouse, as Bonnie Dundee and his Jacobites won the battle for the troubled King James II(VII) though Dundee himself was slain.

269.16 Awa' Whigs, Awa'

Awa' Whigs, awa'!
Awa' Whigs, awa' !
Ye're but a pack o' traitor louns,
Ye'll dae nae guid at a'!

Our thrissles flourish'd fresh and fair,
And bonnie bloomed our roses;
But Whigs cam' like a frost in June,
An' wither'd a' our posies.

Our ancient crown's fa'n in the dust -
Deil blin' them wi' the stoure o't !
An' write their names in his black beuk,
Wha gae the Whigs the power o't.

Our sad decay in church and state
Surpasses my describing;
The Whigs cam' o'er us for a curse,
An' we hae done wi' thriving.

Grim Vengeance lang has ta'en a nap,
But we may see him wauken;
Gude help the day when royal heads
Are hunted like a mauken.

There is little ambiguity about this piece. A mauken is a hare.

277.17 Election Ballad for Westerha'

The story is that Johnstone of Westerha' was a knight from the Borders and a Tory. Burns wrote in his favour and voted for him in 1790. The main reasons for this appear to be that the force behind the Whig candidate was the Duke of Queensbury whom Burns disliked intensely for many reasons, a few of which he details here.

296.19 Lament for Mary Queen of Scots

Burns takes an opportunity to write some very “poetic” verses about a well-known, sympathetic member of the Stuart House on the two hundredth anniversary of her death.

314.22 Ye Jacobites by Name

Ye Jacobites by name, give an ear, give an ear,
Ye Jacobites by name give an ear;
Ye Jacobites by name,
Your fautes I will proclaim,
Your doctrines I maun blame – you will hear.

What is Right and what is Wrang, by the law, by the law ?
What is Right and what is Wrang, by the law ?
What is Right and what is Wrang ?
A short sword and a lang,
A weak arm and a strang for to draw.

What makes heroic strife fam'd afar, fam'd afar ?
What makes heroic strife fam'd afar ?
What makes heroic strife ?
To whet th' Assassin's knife,
Or hunt a Parent's life wi' bluidy war ?

Then let your schemes alone in the State, in the State,
Then let your schemes alone in the State,
Then let your schemes alone,
Adore the rising sun,
And leave a man undone to his fate.

A puzzling piece. There is no proclaiming of the Jacobite faults as promised; some advice and a few requests only. There must be some reason for the particular capitalising of words. I don't know what the reference to short and long swords or weak arm and strong may be. The Assassin's knife was presumably for Prince Charlie as he was hunted first in the Highlands and then in Europe for most of the decade following Culloden, with a 30,000 pound price on his head, dead or alive. 'Parent' may refer also to Charlie, or less likely to his father. Whether there is a pun for son in verse 4 or not I don't know; even if so what would that mean? The 'man undone' is Charlie.

314.23 I Hae Been at Crookieden

I hae been at Crookieden, my bonnie laddie, Highland laddie,

The two verses mock the Duke of Cumberland in his defeat while the combatants would shortly meet with a different result at Culloden.

315.24 O, Kenmure's on and awa', Willie

O, Kenmure's on and awa', Willie,
O, Kenmure's on and awa';
An' Kenmure's lord's the bravest lord
That ever Galloway saw !

Success to Kenmure's band, Willie,
Success to Kenmure's band !
There's no a heart that fears a Whig
That rides by Kenmure's hand.

Here's Kenmure's health in wine, Willie,
Here's Kenmure's health in wine !
There ne'er was a coward o' Kenmure's bluid,
Nor yet o' Gordon's line.

O, Kenmure's lads are men, Willie,
O, Kenmure's lads are men !
Their hearts and swords are metal true,
And that their foes shall ken.

They'll live or die wi' fame, Willie,
They'll live or die wi' fame !
But soon wi' sounding victorie,
May Kenmure's lord come hame !

Here's him that's far awa', Willie,
Here's him that's far awa' !
And here's the flower that I lo'e best,
The rose that's like the snaw.

Willie Gordon, Lord Kenmure, was a worthy warrior all right, but his victories were shortlived. He was captured following Culloden and taken to London where he was beheaded in 1716. The last line refers to the Jacobites' white cockade.

342.27 Thanksgiving for a Naval Victory

Ye hypocrites ! Are these your pranks ?
To murder men and give God thanks ?
Desist, for shame, Proceed no further,
God won't accept your thanks for murther.

Probably referring to the same celebration of the Dumfries Volunteers in
342.25

342.25 A Toast

On 12th April 1793 at a meeting of the Dumfries Volunteers at which there was a celebration of the naval victory of Admiral Rodney in the West Indies on the same date in 1782. Burns was called on for a song but instead, extempore gave this poem.

Instead of a song boys, I'll give you a toast,
Here's to the memory of those on the twelfth that we lost,
That we lost did I say ? – nay b y Heaven, that we found
For their fame it will last while the world goes round.
The next in succession I'll give you – the King !
Whoe'er would betray him, on high may he swing !
And here's the grand fabric – our free Constitution,
As built on the base of our great Revolution,
And longer with politics not to be cramm'd,
Be Anarchy curs'd and be Tyuranny damn'd,
And who would to Liberty e'er prove disloyal,
May his son be a hangman and he his first trial.

352.29 O'er the Water to Charlie

We'll o'er the water, we'll o'er the sea,
We'll o'er the water to Charlie;
Come weal come woe, we'll gather and go,
And live and die wi' Charlie.

Come boat me o'er, come row me o'er,
Come boat me o'er to Charlie;
I'll gie John Ross anither bawbee,
To boat me o'er to Charlie.

I lo'e weel my Charlie's name,
Though some there be abhor him;
But O, to see Auld Nick gaun hame,
And Charlie's faes before him.

I swear and vow by moon and stars,
And sun that shines so early,
If I had twenty thousand lives,
I'd die as aft for Charlie.

356.30 Up an Warn A'. Willie

This is an account of the Battle on the Braes of Mar where the Army assembled in 1715 for the Old Pretender was met by a Government army led by the Duke of Argyll. Though the battle itself ended indecisively the result was discouraging enough for James that he decided to give up and return to France.

357.31 Hey ! Johnny Cope

The original song was written by Adam Skirving, the farmer on part of whose land the Battle of Preston Pans was fought in 1745, when Johnny Cope was quickly routed. Burns liked the theme and added some verses, retaining others and the chorus.

Hey! Johnny Cope are ye waukin' yet ?
Or are your drums a-beatin' yet ?

If you are waukin' I would wait
Tae gan tae the couls i' the mornin'.

385.34 Epigram on the Earl of Galloway

The Tory Earl had spoken offensively of Burns. This was Burns reply to a man he had no respect for.

What dost thou in that mansion fair ?
Flit, Galloway, and find
Some narrow, dirty dungeon cave,
The picture of your mind.

No Stewart art thou, Galloway,
The Stewarts all were brave;
Besides, the Stewarts were but fools,
Not one of them a knave.

Bright ran thy line, O Galloway,
Through many a far-fam'd sire;
So ran the far-fam'd Roman way,
And ended in a mire.

Spare me thy vengeance, Galloway,
In quiet let me live;
I ask no kindness at thy hand,
For thou hast none to give.

400.35 Charlie, He's my Darling

Other than the small change in the title, the words in Burns' version are the same as those published for Lady Nairne. There may be variation in publication of both versions.

Charlie, he's my darling,
My darling, my darling;
Charlie he's my darling,
The young chevalier.

Conclusion

The differences Robert Burns had with the Church were not with the structure or the faith but with the disgraceful and specifically sinful conduct of a number of the Church's representatives he knew and the hypocrisy of these same individuals having the power and authority to punish those they deemed sinners and who had neither power nor authority. Despite this he was able to enjoy a few friendships among church leaders.

He seems to have had few heroes in the realm of politics though again he certainly approved of the system of government that was in place and the degree to which liberty was endorsed. He undoubtedly held Jacobite sympathies though he found more people to favour among those leaders of the Whig party than among the Tories. That he mentions political matters,

so seldom in his letters, may suggest that he was aware that most of his correspondents were Whig supporters. Friends, however may have been Tory and maybe were the ones with whom he shared his Jacobite sympathies with ? Since most of the foregoing poems and songs were not published in his lifetime it is still possible he might have shared a reading of his copies with these friends.

In a similar fashion he also made no complaint about the system of monarchy but found only a few of its members to admire. From the selected works reviewed above it seems that he considered Prince Charlie to be worthy of admiration and respect and reckoned that some of his forebears had been less sinning than sinned against. When Prince Charlie died in 1788 and his daughter died the following year it was clear that Jacobitism was a completely lost cause but Burns in his writings seemed to be remembering the lost dream, the idealism, the rightness of what the Jacobites had been struggling for. Just as clearly he recognises that the man in charge now is George Hanover and that's a fact.

In later years he became sufficiently disillusioned with the Hanovers that when the French Revolution began he found a great deal in the supposed objectives of the leaders that he contemplated republicanism. Once again it is possible that his admiration was more for the common people involved than with the leaders and what they were doing. The actions of those leaders were often far from being in keeping with the declared motto of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity that he loved.

In my opinion and in the light of the quoted writings noted above, the answer to the title question is – Yes ! In the footsteps of his forefathers, Robert Burns, the romantic, was a Jacobite in heart and soul and written word, though certainly he was extremely prudent and careful to whom he entrusted those views..

Even so, this opinion may not be shared by some who have studied the life of the Poet extensively, such as our esteemed late bard, Bob Carnie and the Poet's biographer in the 1990s, James Mackay who claims that Burns was not a Jacobite. What do you think ?