

Dubh Ghlase

The Newsletter of the Clan Douglas Society of North America

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 NEW BRUNSWICK -- **Vacant**
 ONTARIO - **Vacant**

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If a local Scottish or Celtic event in your area welcomes clans but lacks a Clan Douglas representative, please consider serving as our Douglas Regent for the occasion.

Representing CDSNA at just one annual event annually is better than having no Douglas presence at all.

REGENT VACANCIES

UNITED STATES

ARKANSAS. Regent(s) needed for Batesville and Hot Springs areas
IDAHO. Regent(s) needed for Boise area
ILLINOIS (North). Regent(s) needed for the Chicago area
INDIANA. Regent(s) needed
KENTUCKY. Regent(s) needed
MINNESOTA. Regent(s) needed for Twin Cities area
MONTANA. Regent(s) needed for Billings, Hamilton & Kalispell areas
NEVADA. Regent(s) needed for Las Vegas area

NEW ENGLAND. Regents needed for Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont
OHIO. Regent(s) needed for Berea area
PENNSYLVANIA. Regent(s) needed
SOUTH DAKOTA. Regent(s) needed for Aberdeen area
TENNESSEE (West/Central). Regent(s) needed
TEXAS (South, Central, East). Regent(s) needed
UTAH. Co-Regent needed for Salt Lake City area
WISCONSIN. Regent(s) needed

CANADA

BRITISH COLUMBIA. Regent(s) needed
NEW BRUNSWICK. Regent(s) needed
ONTARIO. Regent(s) needed
 There are several events in Canada in need of CDSNA representation.



The President's Comments

Hello Clan Douglas Society of North Americas members and friends,

I hope this finds everyone doing well and enjoying their time with family and friends and planning your vacations. I hope many of you will have an opportunity to enjoy one of the many Scottish Games and will help represent Clan Douglas at these events. Take the time and bring the family to a state or local game. If you do not mind traveling a bit, go to a Scottish Game in another State. Or better yet, travel to Scotland where you can represent Clan Douglas.



We continue to strive as Clan Douglas to increase our membership and bring our extended family together. I hope that many of you who already belong to Clan Douglas will do some outreach and bring other fellow Douglases and Septs to our Society. The more the merrier as we want to be the biggest and boldest Clan out there and it will take all of us working together to make it happen.

As always in my President Comments I mention how great our Regents are - they truly are the backbone of Clan Douglas and are very dedicated to representing Clan Douglas. But there are areas of the country and events where we still need Regents and it would be of great benefit to our Society if you would consider becoming a Regent at an event where we lack representation. Being a Regent is absolutely a labor of love but it is quite rewarding seeing people discover their heritage. If you are considering becoming a Regent, we offer games help along with a few items to set up your tent. If you have any questions, you can contact our Vice President Scott Douglas or one of the three Regional VPs: Cora Peterson in the West, Harold Edington Central and Curtis Rowell in the East. I am always available to answer questions as well.

In a communication with William Douglas from the Douglas Archives, William indicated he is going to check with the Board in Douglas, Scotland to see what news there is regarding the potential Monument to Sir James Douglas in the town of Douglas. As members of Clan Douglas, this is something many of us have wanted for a long as I can remember. If/When it comes about, I am hoping our Society of members will donate to this cause and make it happen. More to come on this as things progress. Plans are being discussed for the 2027 General Members Meeting and we hope to have more information regarding this in a newsletter this year. The Vice President of Clan Douglas is responsible for this and Scott Douglas will be making the announcement in the near future. In the meantime, our new Store Keeper is officially up and running and we are very fortunate to have Brandy Mahoney in charge. Brandy has a lot of experience in this area and we are blessed to have her, so the storekeeper is waiting for your orders.

Finally, The Board of Clan Douglas will be busy managing the many aspects of the Society to make sure we do the right thing with the money we have to help with Regents expenses as well as the day to day running of the Society. I appreciate all of these dedicated members and the great job they do. Our updated website is looking really good and Carol Morton-Bianchini, our *defacto* website designer, web administrator, and our Clan Douglas Society Secretary has done an outstanding job on our website and deserves a big round of applause and a HUGE THANK YOU.

Take care everyone; I look forward to hearing from any of you with any questions.

Best Regards,

Mark A. Peterson
President
Clan Douglas Society of North America

The Vice President's Comments

As Vice President of the Clan Douglas Society of North America, I am continually inspired by the dedication and passion of our Regents and volunteers across the continent. Your commitment to representing Clan Douglas at Highland Games and Scottish festivals is the backbone of our Society's presence and growth. Hosting tents, sharing our rich history, and welcoming new members at these events takes time, energy, and heart, and I want to express my deepest gratitude for all you do. Having served as a Regent myself, I understand the challenges of balancing Society commitments with work and family. Yet, the camaraderie and connections we build at local events make every effort worthwhile.



I encourage everyone—whether you can serve as a Regent, Co-Regent, or simply lend a hand at a tent—to support your local games and Regents. Your presence not only strengthens our Clan but also helps sustain the vibrant tradition of Scottish heritage in North America. Together, let's keep Clan Douglas moving forward, honoring our past and building our future.

Thank you for your unwavering support and enthusiasm!

Yours faithfully,
Scott Douglas
Vice President, Clan Douglas Society



The Secretary's Report – 2nd Quarter

1. A Board Meeting has not yet been held for the 2nd Quarter of 2025; therefore, no meeting minutes are available at this time.
2. Membership Update:
 - New Members Enrolled: 11
 - Membership Renewals: 17
3. One Stop Reports have been submitted by Regents for the following events. The One Stop Report is part of the Regent's duties. If there is more than one Regent, one Regent should be responsible for the One Stop Report to the CDSNA Secretary. Blank forms are available at www.clandouglassociety.org under Regent Resources. One Stop reports were completed by the following for 1st Quarter 2025:
 - Betsy and Tyler Chastain represented the organization at the 2025 Smoky Mountain Scottish Festival & Games.
 - Harold Edington represented us at the 2025 St. Louis Scottish Games.
 - Thomas and Matthew Douglass represented Clan Douglas at the 2025 Panama City Beach Scottish Festival.
 - Jeffrey Sparks represented us at Central Florida Scottish Highland Games.
 - Michael Sotomayor represented Clan Douglas at the 2025 Wichita, Kansas Renaissance Festival.
 - Jeffrey Sparks also represented us at the 2025 Ormond Beach, Florida Celtic Festival.
 - Betsy and Tyler Chastain were at the Piping on the Green event in Tullahoma, TN.
 - Randall Chancellor has completed his first One Stop Report for the Alma Highland Games in Alma, Michigan.
4. Website – A new Assistant Website Administrator has accepted a post to assist us in growing and maintaining the website – Harold Edington! Harold needs no introduction and brings his many talents as well as learning some new to our website development. He is also part for the Customer Forum that is still under development.

A strong start to the 2025 Highland Games season. Thank you, Regents for your volunteerism!

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Morton-Bianchini, Secretary
Clan Douglas Society of North America, Ltd.

New and Renewing Members

Welcome to the Clan Douglas Society

Ceud mìle fáilte to our new members this quarter

4508 Mariah Azevedo FL
4502 Kevin Dixon FL
4506 Billy S. Douglas FL
4504 Brian Douglass AL
4501 Brookelynn Gilley WY
4503 Tommy Hartwell FL
4511 Erline James TN
4509 Rachel Secrist FL
4505 Donald Short AL
4510 Betty Stecker FL
4507 Brandi Sturdevant SC

Ceud mìle agus aon taing to our Renewing Members

A hundred thousand and one THANKS

4363	Joan Bishop TX	151	Thelma Hein SC
780	W A Blackwood III NC	1521	Marc L. Hitchins FL
4406	Randall Clendenning SC	4418	Demetrius Hollis VA
4336	Ivan Colwell TN	3943	Ken Morton TN
4449	Richard W. Colwell TN	4010	Jan-Michael Poff NC
3733	Michelle Conine KS	4138	George Reed CO
4268	Heather Leigh Douglas NY	4238	Sandra Sheridan NY
424	Matthew Douglass FL	3558	Michael Sotomayor KS
3170	Joann Gongos OH		

Greetings from the Editor

Hàlo Clan Douglas!

I am excited and honored to step into the role of editor for the *Dubh Ghlaise Newsletter*. Following in Harold's footsteps is no small task—his passion and dedication have crafted a remarkable newsletter. I hope to carry the torch forward, upholding the established tradition of excellence.

Your feedback, whether praise, criticism or suggestions, is always welcome as we shape this journey together. Your contributions are the heartbeat of this newsletter. Please correspondence to me at CDSNA.Editor@gmail.com.

As we move forward, I promise to listen, learn, and work tirelessly to make the *Dubh Ghlaise Newsletter* a source of connection for all of us. Together, we will continue to honor the legacy of Clan Douglas and build new traditions for generations to come.

Respectfully yours,

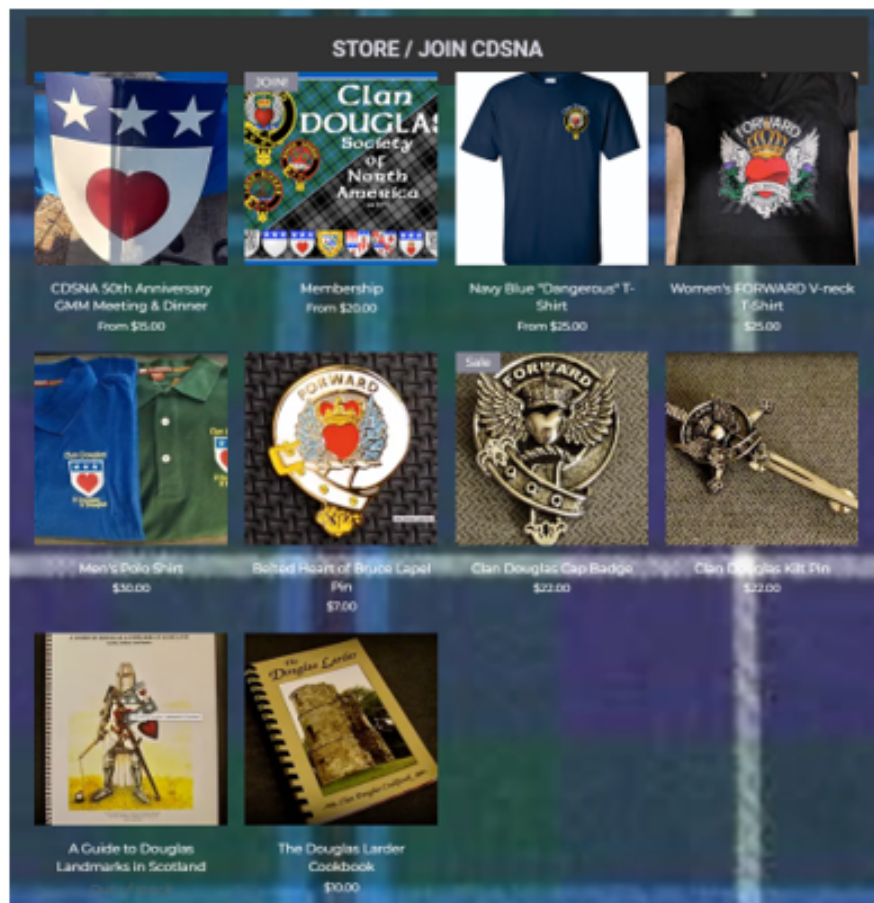
Jamie Haushalter (CDSNA.Editor@gmail.com)
Editor, *Dubh Ghlaise Newsletter*
Mississippi State Regent



My happy place - Sandwich Bay, Unst, Shetland, Scotland

CLAN DOUGLAS STORE GOODS

AVAILABLE FROM THE CDSNA WEBSITE



To purchase CDSNA store goods via credit card:

(DELIVERY/POSTAGE COSTS APPLY & ARE DETERMINED BY THE STOREKEEPER)



1. Use the QR Code to open the CDSNA website Store Goods page **or** select this link: <https://www.clan-douglas-society.org/sale>
2. Donate button and enter the transaction amount.
3. Click on either **Donate with PayPal** or **Donate with Debit or Credit Card**.
4. Write a note indicating the items received. Example: T-Shirt, Cap Badge, cookbook, etc.
5. Enter your transaction information.
6. Click on the **DONATE NOW** button.
7. A confirmation receipt will be sent to your email address.
8. The Storekeeper will process the order and ship your items to you.

Knight Errant: A Trip to Tantallon Castle, Part 1

By Dr. Callum Watson

On January 20 in 1389, Margaret Stewart, countess of Angus in her own right, was granted indefinite leave to reside at the magnificent coastal fortress of Tantallon Castle in East Lothian. I paid another visit to Tantallon late last year, so today seemed like a good opportunity to discuss the rich history of the castle and its various owners. This was supposed to be a fairly light and simple wee post, like most of the previous 'Knight Errant' posts. Instead, it turned into an absolute behemoth, so I have split the post into two. Part 1 will serve as a history of the castle and its occupants during the castle's heyday as a late medieval lordly residence. Part 2, which will appear some time next week I think, will follow the owners of Tantallon through more turbulent times into the early modern period, going closer to our own time than any post on this blog has gone before!

Fellowship with the King (or not): The origins of Tantallon Castle

While earlier structures may have been situated where Tantallon Castle now sits, the traceable history of the current fortification dates to the 1370s. It is not uncommon to find earlier dates cited - sometimes as early as the 1350s - but these claims are not well-evidenced. In all likelihood, Tantallon owes its beginnings to tensions between two of the most influential figures in mid fourteenth-century Scotland - King David II and William, 1st earl of Douglas. On the face of it, these two men had much to connect them. They must have spent a great deal of time in one another's company in their youth, having both been sent to France in 1334 for their own protection during the most dangerous years of the Second War of Scottish Independence. David would have been ten years old at the time, William about half that age, but we might still expect the pair to have developed some personal camaraderie during their time in effective exile. Moreover, both men were inheritors of two of the most significant political figures in early fourteenth-century Scotland - in David's case his father King Robert I and in William's case his uncle 'the Good' Sir James Douglas. The partnership between Robert I and 'the Good' Sir James had been critical to the survival of the Scottish kingdom during the First War of Scottish Independence, and both David and William seem to have independently drawn on the reputations of these forebears to bolster their own authority and influence. Since his return from France in 1347, William had assumed his (in)famous uncle's role as the chief pro-Bruce war leader in southern Scotland and been integral in restoring and maintaining Scottish royal authority across the marches.



Tantallon Castle, with the Bass Rock visible in the background. Easily one of Scotland's finest surviving medieval buildings, and Scotland's best castle as far as I'm concerned, as I hope these posts will demonstrate. Image source: Yours truly.



The arms of Sir Archibald ('syr archibaut') Douglas 'the Grim', as depicted in the late fourteenth-century Armorial de Gelre. Archibald served in the earl's household during the 1350s but in the 1360s became a key part of David II's efforts to undermine William's authority in southern Scotland. For instance, Archibald likely played a particularly important role in helping the king outmanoeuvre Earl William during the so-called 'Earls' Rebellion' in 1363. Image source: <https://uurl.kbr.be/1733715>



The seal William, 1st earl of Douglas, was using in the late 1350s. The 'bludy hart' of Robert Bruce in the centre of his heraldic achievement demonstrates the emphasis he placed on being the rightful successor to Bruce's lieutenant 'the Good' Sir James Douglas, both in terms of his landed rights but also in his right to royal patronage. Image source: <https://douglashistory.co.uk/history/heraldry/seals.htm>

However, the *realpolitik* of mid fourteenth-century aristocratic life trumped any of these considerations. When William returned to Scotland from France in 1347, King David was a prisoner in England, having been captured at the Battle of Neville's Cross the previous October. He would remain there until October 1357, and this eleven-year absence, coupled with his absence in France from 1334-1341, made the king anxious to vigorously reassert his personal authority over his kingdom on his release. Doing so necessarily involved challenging, and where possible curtailing, the power of those men who had carved out a place for themselves as great regional lords while David was not present. William was one of the most extreme examples of such an individual. Even David himself was

forced to acknowledge as much when, in February 1357, he created the earldom of Douglas for William. But as King David began to re-establish political networks of his own, these networks were quickly deployed to undermine Earl William's position.

In William's case, David turned to other prominent members of the wider Douglas kindred to assist him in chipping away at the edges of William's massive socio-political affinity. By promoting the interests of such individuals, David was able to present them as alternative sources of patronage and protection to the lesser lords who had previously seen William as their natural leader. In particular, William's first cousin Archibald 'the Grim' and more distant cousin James Douglas of Dalkeith were the figures who the king drew into his orbit as a means of undermining the earl. Archibald was the illegitimate (and only surviving) son of 'the Good' Sir James, and while his chances of legally inheriting the Douglas estates seemed low, his closer blood relationship to the dreaded 'Black Douglas' greatly increased his appeal to border communities in whose memories Archibald's father still loomed large. Douglas of Dalkeith, who served as King David's armour-bearer in the mid-1360s, offered a way for David to challenge William's landed interests. When William returned from France and begun his career as a Scottish border warlord in 1347, much of southern Scotland was still occupied by the English. William employed his fearsome military skills in recovering his own inheritance, but he was also free to reoccupy any southern lordships he could lay his hands on and hold them as his own. As such, the lordships of Dalkeith in Midlothian and Liddesdale in Roxburghshire - which legally belonged to the Lothian branch of the kindred - had been taken from the English by William and held by him thereafter. In 1353, William had even gone so far as to ambush and kill Douglas of Dalkeith's uncle William Douglas of Lothian (himself a notorious scoundrel) in part to maintain his control over the disputed lordships! By offering royal support for Douglas of Dalkeith's rights in these areas, David could deny William not only the prestigious titles, but also the revenues and the tenancies associated with them.



A map of Scotland, made by former English spy John Hardyng for presentation to King Henry VI of England in 1457 (BL MS Lansdowne 204). Tantallon ('Temptaloun') is the third castle from the corner in the bottom left (i.e., south-east) corner of the map. Earl William's earlier residence, Dalkeith ('Dalketh'), is visible nearby, while King David's preferred residence, Edinburgh, can be seen further along the Forth, emphasising the 'geo-political' rationale behind Earl William's building project. Image source: <https://www.meisterdrucke.uk/fine-art-prints/English-School/1351652/Map-of-Scotland-by-John-Harding,-c.1450.html>

It was directly as a result of this royal policy that Tantallon Castle came to be built. Over the course of the 1360s, David II issued a series of charters in favour of Douglas of Dalkeith specifically designed to assert his rights as the *de facto* heir of Douglas of Lothian. In October 1360, the king confirmed a charter by Douglas of Lothian acknowledging Douglas of Dalkeith as his heir for the Fife lordship of Aberdour. Aberdour was not one of the lordships occupied by Earl William, but the explicit identification of Douglas of Dalkeith as lord of Aberdour on the basis of his relationship to Douglas of Lothian set a clear precedent for further encroachments into the disputed territories. In December 1365, when chronicler Jean Froissart visited Scotland from Hainault, Earl William entertained him for fifteen days 'in a castle five leagues from Edinburgh which is called in that country Dalkeith' (*en un chastel a cinq lieues de Haindebourch que on dit ou pays Dalquest*). This was the earl putting on a show for a visiting foreign writer already known for trumpeting the qualities of his patrons in literary form, and so the choice of venue surely reflected what he felt was the most splendid and impressive surroundings he had available to him (adding further doubt to the existence - yet - of a brand new castle at Tantallon that he might otherwise want to show off). However, by January 1369, Douglas of Dalkeith was in possession of the castle, while Earl William was out on his ear, so to speak.

It is worth considering Earl William's perspective on all of this. For all David's suspicions of him, he probably understood his activities as being far more patriotic and public-spirited than the king gave him credit for. He had returned to Scotland in 1347 to find most of the kingdom directly occupied by the English and the king unable to do anything about it. In the years that followed, he had regularly and repeatedly placed himself in mortal danger, not merely in pursuit of his personal interests but in defence of the Bruce claim to the kingship (upon which William's claims to the Douglas patrimony rested). Though he had technically acted without explicit royal authorisation, his actions had been instrumental in the recovery of vast swathes of occupied territory, and indeed in the survival of the Scottish kingdom as a whole. Any additional possessions he may have acquired in the process probably seemed to Earl William reasonable recompense for the risks he had taken and for the service he had provided. He thus expected them to be ratified by a grateful King David on his eventual return. The king's assaults on the earl's position since 1357, and the loss of Dalkeith in particular,

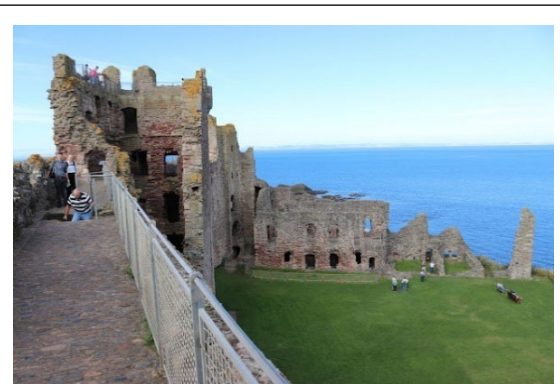
rather than being seen as an attempt to restore the rightful primacy of the crown authority in Scottish politics, must thus have appeared to William as deeply cynical (which, of course, they also were). Earl William's response to build for himself a new residence, one that displayed the might and majesty of the Douglas earl while also offering him a base of operations in the Lothians, where William and David continued to compete for the loyalty of the wealthy, influential, and ambitious local knights and noblemen. Tantallon Castle was the result.

The Two Three Towers: The layout of Tantallon

The first thing to note about Tantallon Castle is that it is a masterpiece of frugal castle-building. Earl William found himself a stretch of coastline within the barony of North Berwick - which he held from Robert Stewart, earl of Fife and son of the future King Robert II of Scotland, of whom we will hear much more later - where a suitable promontory jutted out into the Firth of Forth, with sheer cliffs on three sides leading nowhere but straight down into the water. Since these cliffs would provide virtually unsurpassable protection, William could afford to construct relatively small walls to enclose a courtyard on these three sides. He was thus free to divert the funds that otherwise might have gone into constructing more formidable defences on these three sides into making the buildings on the landward side even more impressive than they might otherwise have been. Earl William had one enormous wall built between the two points where the promontory met the land, taller and deeper than those of any contemporary Scottish castle - including, crucially, even those belonging to the king. Admittedly, some of the height and depth these walls now boast may have been due to later additions, but from its inception the defences at Tantallon would have more substantial than any other comparable buildings in Scotland. To visitors approaching by land or by sea, it would have stood as an imposing and impressive testament to the wealth, prestige, and military power of the Douglases.

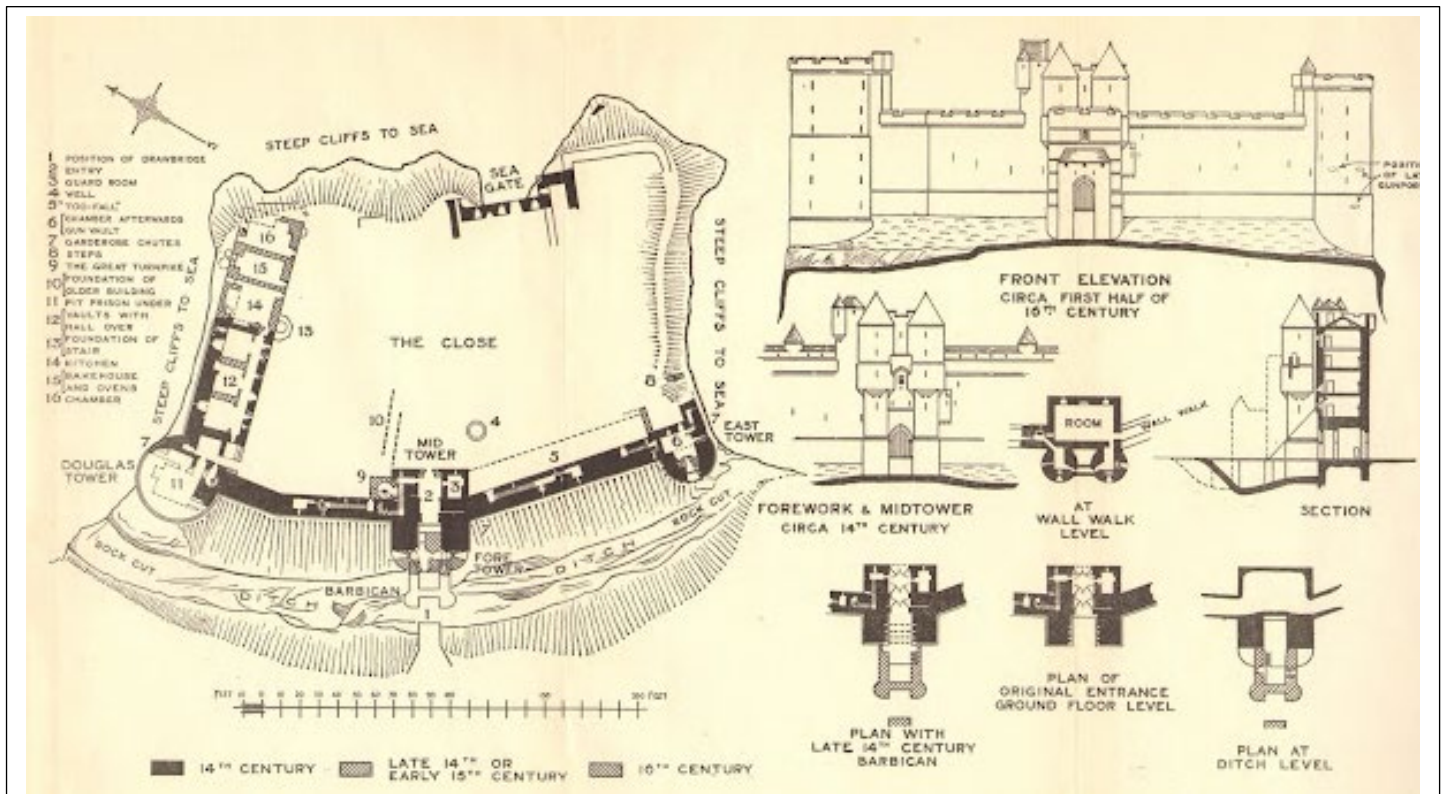


A modern illustration of 'David's Tower', the palatial residential block constructed for King David II of Scotland at Edinburgh Castle. Work on David's Tower began around 1367, about the same time as Earl William may have first commissioned Tantallon. The king's investment in these lavish living quarters may also have influenced the construction of Tantallon Castle, especially the earl's decision to build three large towers along the length of the landward wall, including the seven-storey residence for himself and his family in the western tower. Coincidentally, one of Earl William's descendants - James Douglas, earl of Morton - would play a key role in destroying David's Tower at the end of the 'Lang Siege' in 1573. Image source: <https://blog.edinburghcastle.scot/discovery-dauids-tower/>



A view westwards along the landward wall of Tantallon Castle, taking in the inner ward and the range of buildings that extend 'inwards' from the wall. The people below offer some sense of the incredible scale of the building itself. Image source: Yours truly.

Along the length of the wall were three large towers, while a range of ancillary buildings projected inwards from the western end of the outer wall. The easternmost tower was at least five-storeys tall and likely most comprised residential rooms for the castle's more prestigious guests. Though badly damaged when the castle was reduced in the seventeenth-century, these rooms retain evidence of fireplaces, privies, and large windows with views across the Forth, suggesting that they were intended to offer visitors a high degree of comfort and demonstrate the earl's largesse towards his friends and allies. The lower part of the central tower would have originally comprised a large and impressive gateway into the castle. This part of the castle was extensively remodelled in later centuries, making the entrance smaller, adding additional floors, and extending the tower landwards. The upper part of the tower in its original context would nonetheless have boasted at least two storeys of rooms, offering accommodation and administrative space for the constable and other favoured servants of the earl. The castle's first known constable - in place by 1388 and probably from its inception - was Sir Alan Lauder, whose primary residence was only a short boat trip away on the Bass Rock. The central tower offered the only means of entering the castle from the landward side and would originally have been accessible via a wooden drawbridge that could be lowered across a ditch that ran along the length of the outer wall. Beyond the ditch, there would no doubt have been other ancillary buildings, as well as further defensive structures such as earthworks and perhaps a palisade wall (the earthworks visible at the castle today are later and were probably constructed for the siege that ended the castle's useful life in 1651).



A mid twentieth-century plan of Tantallon Castle, from a Ministry of Works guidebook. It offers a helpful impression of the layout of the castle as well as the various stages of development that took place across four centuries. Image source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tantallon_Castle_plan_1950.jpg

The westernmost tower - now referred to as 'the Douglas Tower' - was a residential bloc for the earl and his family. It comprised an astonishing seven-storeys, the lower two of which were probably used for storage. Above this, at least one and perhaps two storeys would have been given over to chambers in which the earl could receive visitors - both tenants and allies - and could see to the day-to-day administration of his extensive estates. The upper floors would likely have been given over to bed chambers for the earl and countess and the various close family members that would have resided at Tantallon (of whom we will discuss much later). The Douglas Tower was even more thoroughly in the seventeenth-century, but again it shows evidence of fireplaces and privies on multiple floors, as well as hints at the views available across the Forth. It is not unreasonable to suppose that, as lavish as the guest quarters in the east tower seem to have been, the rooms in the Douglas Tower would have been even more luxurious, demonstrating as clearly as possible the earl's wealth and grasp of contemporary fashions.

The range of buildings that projected into the castle northward from the Douglas Tower was dominated by the great hall, which occupied most of the top floor of this structure. This too would no doubt have been lavishly decorated to further emphasise the impressive revenues Earl William commanded from his various landed interests across Scotland. Large windows look out onto the courtyard to the east but also down into the bay to the west of the castle and upriver down the Forth in the direction of North Berwick and Edinburgh. These windows

were set deep into the walls with space for guests to sit and appreciate the views, offering some potentially interesting insights into the aesthetic taste of the late fourteenth-century Scottish aristocracy. The hall was apparently accessible from the courtyard but also separately from the Douglas Tower itself. This was presumably to allow the earl and his family to make suitably grand entrances at appropriately dramatic moments during gatherings there, or to slip away into their private apartments if things grew dull. Beneath the great hall, various rooms seem to have served as further storage space, while at the northernmost end of the range the kitchen and perhaps a brewhouse were to be found, offering the serving staff quick and easy access to the great hall before the food they were preparing for the earl and his guests had time to cool.

Square holes on the inside of the formidable outer wall suggest that a wooden structure once abutted this structure. It is tempting to speculate that this may have been a stable block, not least because none of the surviving buildings appear to have performed this function. Moreover, if there was not space to stable horses in the inner courtyard, the earl and his companions would have to leave their horses in the outer ward and make their way through the magnificent entranceway on foot. Finally, the only way Tantallon could be accessed other than through the grand entrance at the base of the central tower was a sea-gate, which presumably led to a jetty of some kind below by which people and supplies could go to and from the castle. The thick wall, stout towers, imposing location, and few entry points made Tantallon a formidable fortress against potential foes. Yet even in their ruined state, the surviving buildings indicate that it would also have been a comfortable and elegant lordly residence. It thus perfectly balanced Earl William's desire to present himself as both a fearsome warlord and a refined and respectable aristocrat.

Le Chateau d'Amour. Tantallon as a love nest, c. 1374-1384

The earliest reference to Tantallon Castle that I have been able to identify is a letter produced by Earl William on 21 June 1374 'in our castle of Tantallon' (*In Castro nostro de Temptaloun*). A dispute had arisen between the earl and the monks at Melrose Abbey over the advowson (i.e., the right to recommend a priest) for the church of Cavers in Roxburghshire, and the earl was writing to clarify - and defend - his position on the matter. The nature of the dispute is not important here, but the letter offers a couple of interesting pieces of information about the castle's early use. Firstly, it shows that the castle was sufficiently complete and furnished by mid-1374 that Earl William was able to use it for

administering his lordly business. Assuming he had been booted out of Dalkeith shortly before Douglas of Dalkeith was given permission to repair the castle in January 1369, this would mean it had taken around five, maybe six, years to reach this stage of completion. This is pretty good going by the standards of fourteenth-century castle-building, but



The west tower, known as the Douglas Tower because this was most likely the main residential block of the castle. Five of the seven storeys can be seen here, while the remaining two are located behind the remaining revetment in the lower part of this image. While they have been exposed to the elements since 1651, when the castle was in use these would have been some of the most sumptuous rooms in the castle, at times perhaps even in the whole kingdom. A partial inventory of the castle's furnishings from 1581 is a testament to this fact. Image source: Yours truly.



The range of buildings along the western edge of the promontory, seen from the top of the central tower. The substantial but unroofed building projecting from the west tower comprised two storeys of hall space - a great hall, with large windows on either side offering views into the inner ward but also upriver across the bay to the west of the castle, on the upper floor and a low ('laigh') hall below, with additional space for storage as well. The fragmentary buildings north of the hall block would likely have comprised a kitchen, bakehouse, and a brewhouse, adding to the comfort of life in the castle. Image source: Yours truly.



Melrose Abbey in the Scottish Borders. Though Tantallon Castle first appears in the written record in the context of a dispute between Earl William and the monks at Melrose, the earl would be buried there after his death in 1384, and the Douglasses would maintain close relations with the abbey until the Reformation. Image source: <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/about-us/news/return-to-melrose-abbey/>



The sea-gate at Tantallon Castle. The earl's letter of 1374 strongly suggests that a sea-gate of some description existed from the castle's very earliest period of habitation. Image source: Yours truly.

Thomas's widow Margaret Stewart. Born probably in the mid-1350s, Margaret was the eldest daughter of Thomas Stewart, earl of Angus, and, following his death in 1362, she had inherited the earldom of Angus in her own right. On the death of her husband in 1377, Margaret also gained rights to a third of the earldom of Mar (her widow's *terce*), making her a substantial landowner with no offspring to take care of and - crucially - no close male relatives who could put pressure on her to make another marriage. Instead, Margaret seems to have focused on using her newfound financial independence to re-establish herself in East Lothian, where she likely spent her youth among her mother's kin the Sinclairs of Herdmanston. This brought her into the sphere of influence of Earl William. The Sinclairs of Herdmanston were, after all, precisely the sort of Lothian lords that the earl sought to bring into his wider affinity in the region around Tantallon. As the new earl of Mar, William was no doubt also keenly interested in Margaret's share of her late husband's earldom. Yet what may have started out as a purely political arrangement appears to have developed into something much more personal, as before long Earl William and Countess Margaret were lovers.

A precise chronology is difficult to reconstruct, and we will likely never know who approached who first or how exactly the relationship progressed from professional to romantic. Margaret seems to have moved into Tantallon no later than 2 January 1379, on which date she issued a charter in favour of 'our dearest [half-]brother John Sinclair, lord of Herdmanston...at the castle of Tantallon' (*dilocto fratri nostro Jolianni de Sancto Claro domino de Herdmanston...apud castrum de Temptaloune*). Whether or not the affair had begun by this point is unclear, but Earl William witnessed the charter along with a substantial company of his local adherents. Then, on 17 February 1379, while at Edinburgh, King Robert II granted Margaret's younger sister Elizabeth permission to resign her share of their father's inheritance in Margaret's favour, enabling Margaret to assume control of the whole earldom of Angus. There is no indication in the document itself that Earl William played a part in securing this concession for Margaret, but the fact it was concluded at Edinburgh, barely 25 miles from William's coastal fortress at Tantallon and very much within his sphere of influence, is suggestive. Moreover, on 12 March 1379, Sir Alexander Lindsay of Glen Esk resigned his own claims to a share of the Angus inheritance, a decision that he claimed to have reached 'at the instance of a noble and mychty Lorde, sir William, erle of Douglas and of Marr'.

These resignations and reorientations of Margaret's landed interests all appear to have built to an arrangement between Countess Margaret and Earl William, ratified on 11 May 1381. The countess - who William rather awkwardly addressed in the associated document as 'our systir', which she technically was according to fourteenth century canon law - agreed to give the earl custody of all of her 'landes rentez and possessiouns' in Mar in return for an annual rent of 200 merks, to be paid in two even instalments each ear ('twa hundrethmarcis of sterlinges be yhere to be paiet till our forsaied systir or hir attorneys, at twa termes of yhere customable, be evyn porcion'). Prof. Steve Boardman has cleverly connected the sum promised to Margaret by Earl William to a grant made four days later by Robert II to the earl's son

not absurdly fast. Of course, Tantallon would not have to be fully finished off for Earl William to be working there. But the residential parts would have to at least have been substantially complete for the castle to have been liveable. The second interesting detail to note is that in order to placate the Bishop of St Andrews William Landellis (who the monks at Melrose had apparently appealed to for support, much to Earl William's chagrin), Earl William had apparently travelled from Tantallon to St Andrews and back again 'by sea with not a little danger' (*de temptaloun ad villam fanctiandreee bina vice laborando i non modico maris periculo*) to discuss the matter with Landellis in person. This serves as direct evidence that the aforementioned sea-gate (or its precursor) was in use from the castle's inception and being used to ferry not only supplies but also personnel - including the earl himself.

Already one of Scotland's most wealthy and influential lords when he wrote to the monks at Melrose in 1374, Earl William's fortunes received another striking boost in 1377 when he inherited a second earldom following the death of his brother-in-law Thomas, earl of Mar. This event also furnished Tantallon with perhaps its most remarkable resident -



The great hall at Tantallon Castle. One of the main social spaces within the castle, it no doubt offered plenty of opportunities for Earl William, his mistress Countess Margaret, and her Sinclair kinsmen to cement their socio-political connections during her time at Tantallon. Image source: Yours truly.

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accompanied King Robert on his journey to Edinburgh to meet with the French force and he received an astonishing 7,500 *livres tournois* of the war subsidy that the French brought with them. Only the king received a greater share of the French money (10,00 gold francs), while even Carrick himself received only 5,500 *l.t.* The campaigning that followed failed to live up to the promises that had been made of it in the build-up. But, while Froissart writes extensively on the tensions between the French and their Scottish hosts, and is generally disparaging of the latter, he is keen to stress that Earl James himself was well-liked among the visiting Frenchmen, in spite of his very Scottish concern to stick to guerrilla tactics and avoid provoking a pitched battle with English forces in northern England.

The Anglo-Scottish hostilities overseen by Carrick and Earl James reached their zenith in the summer of 1388 with a remarkably ambitious two-pronged Scottish invasion of northern England. While a large Scottish army led by Carrick's younger brother Robert Stewart, earl of Fife, and Archibald the Grim, now Lord of Galloway, advanced into north-west England, Earl James was to lead a smaller force, composed primarily of his own numerous battle-hardened followers augmented by those of his local rival in the south-east George Dunbar, earl of March, into north-eastern England. Carrick may have originally intended to play a role in the leadership of one of these forces (probably that in the west),

but he had been kicked by a horse amid the preparations for the campaign and left with injuries that would restrict his physical capacity for the rest of his life. Despite this inauspicious start, Scottish confidence was high as the two armies descended into northern England. Earl James's force penetrated as far south as Newcastle, where they engaged in an altercation with an English force led by Sir Henry 'Hotspur' Percy, son and heir of the earl of Northumberland. Froissart, who constructed his narrative from reports he had received from a pair of the earl's former adherents he had met while they were travelling in France, claims that amid the fighting, Earl James managed to seize Hotspur's pennon - i.e., the triangular flag hung at the tip of Hotspur's lance. The chronicler places a mocking challenge in the earl's mouth for Percy to see if he could recover the pennon before the Scots recrossed the border. Whether or not this rebuke of Hotspur's chivalric pride took place or not, he hastily assembled a militia force and struck out north in pursuit of the Scots, overtaking them and attacking their camp near Otterburn in Redesdale on 5 August. The Scots showed remarkable tactical coordination and resourcefulness in responding to this sudden assault, quickly regrouping and ultimately scattering Hotspur's army as well as capturing Hotspur and his younger brother Ralph. However, Earl James was killed in the fighting, pierced Froissart claims by three spears - 'one in the shoulder, another in the chest...and another in the thigh' (*l'une en l'espaule, l'autre en la poitrine...et l'autre en la cuisse*). Never one to

shy away from a little melodrama, Froissart has the dying earl, surrounded and defended by his faithful followers and kinsmen, proudly state: 'Praise God, few of my ancestors have died in their bedrooms, nor in their beds.'

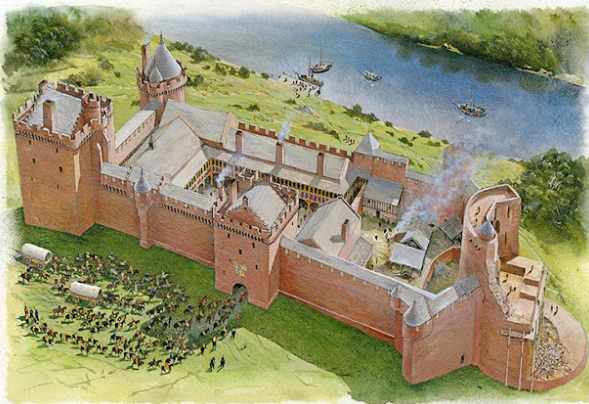
Loenges a Dieu, il n'est gaires de mes anciseurs qui soient mors en chambres, ne sur lits. As fittingly chivalrous as his demise may have been, the death of Earl James - who may not yet have seen his thirtieth birthday - without legitimate offspring of his own would usher in a period of intense crisis in Scotland. Tantallon would be right at the heart of this crisis.

A Game of Thrones: Tantallon in an age of political crisis, 1388-1424

With Earl James now dead, the question of who should inherit his widespread lands, impressive titles, and huge and far-reaching political affinity. The answer was not as straightforward as might be expected. The most obvious candidate was the earl's brother-in-law Sir Malcolm Drummond, who had married Earl James's sister Isabella at an uncertain date (possibly between 1363 and 1369, when Malcolm's aunt Margaret was Queen of Scots). This would have suited Carrick particularly well, since Drummond was also Carrick's brother-in-law through Drummond's sister Annabella. Drummond was an influential figure among James's affinity and an experienced war leader, and his succession would ensure that all of the late earl's possessions, and most importantly his extensive political networks, remained intact. This had been and would continue to be critical to the survival of Carrick's hold on the office of guardian. However, Drummond was not the only contender. In the wake of Otterburn, Archibald the Grim quickly emerged as an alternative candidate for the lion's share of the Douglas inheritance. As a bastard - in more or less every sense of the



The charming illustration of the Battle of Otterburn on an interpretation board near the site of the battle. A remarkable victory for the Scots, the death of James, 2nd earl of Douglas, in the fighting did wonders for the family's reputation for chivalric accomplishment both within Scotland and abroad. However, it also sparked a crisis in Scotland, both for the kingdom in general and for his dependants in particular, in which Tantallon would play a major role. Image source: Yours truly.



A modern reconstruction of Bothwell Castle - preferred residence of Archibald 'the Grim', 3rd earl of Douglas - as it might have looked in the late fourteenth- or early fifteenth-centuries. The entail by which Archibald inherited the primary Douglas estates in 1388-1389 was probably originally drawn up to improve the standing of Sir William Douglas of Lothian within the wider Douglas kindred, and may not have been well-known in the 1380s, except to Archibald and his closest kin. Image source: <https://blog.historicenvironment.scot/2019/11/the-black-douglasses/>

James of 200 merks sterling (*ducentas marcas sterlingorum*) to be taken from the burgh customs at Haddington twice annually (at Pentecost and Martinmas, which may offer a clue as to when Margaret may have received her biannual payments too).



The arms of the earl of Douglas ('count a douglas'), as depicted in the late fourteenth-century Armorial de Gelre. After inheriting the earldom of Mar through his wife Margaret, Earl William quartered the Douglas arms with those of Mar, a relatively new practice in Scottish heraldry that demonstrates his sensativity to modern fashions (and perhaps reflecting tastes learned during his youth in France from 1334-1347). The uncertain dating of the Armorial de Gelre makes it difficult to say for certain whether these were meant to represent Earl William or his son James, but both men used this heraldic achievement on their seals. Image source: <https://uurl.kbr.be/1733715>

Each aspect of this arrangement reinforced the others. For Earl William, the deal allowed him to reunite the entirety of the earldom of Mar and combine this substantial prize with the already extensive Douglas estates and titles. For Margaret's Sinclair half-brothers John, James, and Walter, they gained a strong personal connection to the most powerful magnate in their local area and a prominent place in his inner circle. For Margaret, she secured a guaranteed income from her Mar inheritance (without the bother of having to administer the estates themselves and ensure their productivity), complete control over her late father's earldom - which among other things would have further enhanced her financial resources - and residence at Tantallon, one of the newest and more lavish castles in Scotland, which also kept her close to her Sinclair kin in East Lothian. This is before we even mention the private benefits for Margaret and William of their romantic liaison, which are evidenced most strongly by the birth of an illegitimate son George at some point before William's death in early 1384. Interestingly, we get a hint at what Earl William's wife - also named Margaret - felt about the arrangement when, sometime between 1384 and 1388, she paid for masses to be said for the souls of her late husband, late brother, and still living son, and conspicuously failed to show equal affection for all three of them: '...for the salvation of the soul of our aforesaid lord, the late Lord William,

our husband, and of the soul of our *dearest* brother, the late Lord Thomas, earl of Mar, and for the salvation of the soul of our *dearest* son James, earl of Douglas...' [my italics] ...*pro salute anime predicti domini nostri quondam Domini Willelmi mariti nostri et anime carissimi fratris nostri quondam Domini Thome comitis de Marr et pro salute an[ime nostre et] carissimi tiliu nostri Jacobi comitis de Douglas...* One can hardly blame her, especially since Margaret Stewart and her infant son continued to reside at Tantallon even after Earl William's death, presumably to ensure his legitimate son and successor James, 2nd earl of Douglas, continued to enjoy access to Margaret's share of Mar.

Linchpin: Tantallon at the heart of Scottish politics, 1384-1388

We will return to Margaret again before the end of this post, but for now we should turn our attention to Tantallon's second 'owner' - Earl William's son, James, 2nd earl of Douglas. James was probably only a few years Margaret's junior, and is described by Froissart as a 'fair young man' (*veü jeune filz*) in 1365, when he would have been around seven or eight. He made his first impact on public affairs in 1371 when, still only in his early teens, he was knighted by King Robert II, married to the new king's second daughter Isabella, and granted a whopping annuity of £266 from crown revenues. From the perspective of King Robert, who had suddenly inherited the kingship when his uncle David II dropped dead without warning at Edinburgh Castle on 22 February 1371, this union gave the influential Earl William a vested interest in the survival and prosperity of the new Stewart dynasty and, by extension, secured the support of the earl's extensive political affinity as well. From the perspective of James's father, the marriage promised a new start for Douglas fortunes. As previously noted, Earl William's interests had come under pressure during David II's reign, and a marriage between his son and the new king's daughter brought with it the prospect of friendly relations between the Douglases and the crown for a generation or two at least.

In the years that followed, the young James played a critical role in promoting his father's interests both within royal circles and in the kingdom more generally. We have already seen how Earl William may have utilised the 200 merks granted to James in 1381 to pay for his rental of Countess Margaret's rights in Mar. In the Haddington grant, James is styled 'James Douglas of Liddesdale' (*Jacob de Douglas de Lydalisdale*), while when witnessing a charter in favour of Sir John



Kildrumny Castle, the caput (administrative centre) of the earldom of Mar. Countess Margaret would likely have spent much of her married life here, and while here she no doubt took considerable responsibility for the administration of her frequently absent husband's lands. But she seems not to have developed any affection for the place. Though gaining possession of Kildrumny was critical to establishing Earl William's authority in Mar after 1377, Tantallon nonetheless remained his primary residence. Image source: Yours truly.

Swinton of that ilk (who eventually became James's stepfather) nine days later on 20 May James is styled 'the lord James Douglas, lord of Liddesdale' (*domino Jacobo de Douglas domino vallis de Lydalysdale*). This indicates that by this point Earl William had granted the lordship of Liddesdale to his son. Liddesdale was one of those lordships that were disputed between the earl and James Douglas of Dalkeith, and the grant to William's son, who after all was now the king's 'beloved son[-in-law]' (*dilecto filio*), must be understood as an effort to frustrate any attempts to alienate it from the Douglas earls. The terms of the Haddington grant also associated the young James with King Robert's eldest son and heir, John Stewart, earl of Carrick (*Johanni comiti de Carric*). Carrick was born in the late 1330s, making him perhaps twenty years James's senior. During the later years of David II's reign, he may have been being groomed as David's most likely successor as king, given that Carrick's father was at least seven or eight years older than David and therefore not expected to outlive him. David's sudden death in 1371 had postponed Carrick's accession, but the aging King Robert seems to have hoped to placate his energetic and ambitious son by promoting him as the chief royal agent in southern Scotland and giving him effective control over Scottish foreign policy. In his execution of these responsibilities, a close alliance with the immensely influential Douglas earls would be absolutely essential, and this seems to have been achieved by binding Carrick and James as faithful and supportive brothers-in-law.



Linlithgow in West Lothian, with the fifteenth-century palace in the foreground. In early 1371, Earl William staged an armed gathering at Linlithgow, apparently as a challenge to the smooth accession of King Robert II of Scotland. The meaning of the so-called 'Douglas Demonstration' is obscure, but in part it was probably an attempt to ensure royal policy towards the earl did not continue in the same hostile vein as it had done during the reign of David II. Image source: <https://www.visitlothian.co.uk/blog/2019/june/five-reasons-to-visit-linlithgow-palace/>

During the early 1380s, James was to be found cooperating with Carrick in Anglo-Scottish diplomacy. He and his brother-in-law were also both singled out as recipients of gratitude by John of Gaunt after he briefly sought refuge in Scotland to escape the Peasants' Revolt in 1381. Developments in 1384 only served to make their relationship even more significant. Firstly, in February, after more than a decade of increasing tensions between Scotland and England over Scottish territory that remained occupied by the English after the end of the Second War of Scottish Independence in 1357, the two kingdoms found themselves openly at war once again. Then, in April, following a destructive raid through Teviotdale, Earl William took ill and died at Douglas Castle in Lanarkshire. Why he died here and not at Tantallon may have been a deliberate decision by the earl, reflecting a desire to associate himself with the older generations of the family whose power centred around Douglasdale. Alternatively, it may simply be that the illness that killed him was sudden and unexpected and thus prevented him from returning to his primary residence before it overtook him. Whatever the case, Earl William's death delivered his titles, estates, and enormous political affinity to James, still only in his mid-twenties. The immense political influence this brought with it was now brought to



The storming of Wark Castle in 1385, from a fifteenth-century manuscript of Jean Froissart's *Croniques*. While the Scots were willing to condone the seizure and reduction of a few border strongholds like Wark, their refusal to contemplate a large-scale pitched battle against the English during 1385 was a major source of tension during the joint Franco-Scottish invasion of northern England in that year. This ensured no such joint military endeavour was attempted again, at least in Britain. Image source: https://commons.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Attack_on_Wark_Castle.jpg

bear in delivering his brother-in-law Carrick even greater influence over the governance of Scotland. At a council at Holyrood in November, King Robert was judged to be 'unable on each occasion to be attentive continually to the execution of justice and the law of his kingdom in person' and thus Carrick was appointed to oversee the day-to-day management of crown business on his father's behalf. The extent to which this was achieved against the king's will has perhaps been overstated, but it is important to understand that after November 1384 Carrick was now the *de facto* ruler of Scotland and maintained this position primarily through the backing of his brother-in-law Earl James and his vast, highly-militarised affinity. Tantallon was now the home of the young man whose socio-political clout was propping up the Scottish royal administration.

Predictably, given the prior interest of Earl James and his brother-in-law in Anglo-Scottish relations, the Carrick guardianship saw a significant intensification of hostilities between Scotland and her southern neighbour. In May 1385, the second earl met a sizeable French armed force at Leith, which had been dispatched to assist the Scots in what was envisioned as an ambitious joint-invasion of northern England that summer. Arrangements for this expedition may have begun during the lifetime of and been facilitated by Earl William, who had after all spent a significant portion of his youth in France. The fact that Earl James met the French as they arrived adds weight to this interpretation and suggests that he may have inherited some of his father's French connections as well as his Scottish possessions. Earl James also

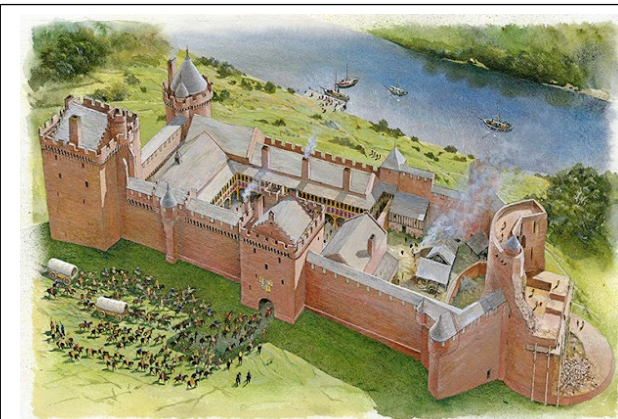
accompanied King Robert on his journey to Edinburgh to meet with the French force and he received an astonishing 7,500 *livres tournois* of the war subsidy that the French brought with them. Only the king received a greater share of the French money (10,00 gold francs), while even Carrick himself received only 5,500 *l.t.* The campaigning that followed failed to live up to the promises that had been made of it in the build-up. But, while Froissart writes extensively on the tensions between the French and their Scottish hosts, and is generally disparaging of the latter, he is keen to stress that Earl James himself was well-liked among the visiting Frenchmen, in spite of his very Scottish concern to stick to guerrilla tactics and avoid provoking a pitched battle with English forces in northern England.

The Anglo-Scottish hostilities overseen by Carrick and Earl James reached their zenith in the summer of 1388 with a remarkably ambitious two-pronged Scottish invasion of northern England. While a large Scottish army led by Carrick's younger brother Robert Stewart, earl of Fife, and Archibald the Grim, now Lord of Galloway, advanced into north-west England, Earl James was to lead a smaller force, composed primarily of his own numerous battle-hardened followers augmented by those of his local rival in the south-east George Dunbar, earl of March, into north-eastern England. Carrick may have originally intended to play a role in the leadership of one of these forces (probably that in the west),

but he had been kicked by a horse amid the preparations for the campaign and left with injuries that would restrict his physical capacity for the rest of his life. Despite this inauspicious start, Scottish confidence was high as the two armies descended into northern England. Earl James's force penetrated as far south as Newcastle, where they engaged in an altercation with an English force led by Sir Henry 'Hotspur' Percy, son and heir of the earl of Northumberland. Froissart, who constructed his narrative from reports he had received from a pair of the earl's former adherents he had met while they were travelling in France, claims that amid the fighting, Earl James managed to seize Hotspur's pennon - i.e., the triangular flag hung at the tip of Hotspur's lance. The chronicler places a mocking challenge in the earl's mouth for Percy to see if he could recover the pennon before the Scots recrossed the border. Whether or not this rebuke of Hotspur's chivalric pride took place or not, he hastily assembled a militia force and struck out north in pursuit of the Scots, overtaking them and attacking their camp near Otterburn in Redesdale on 5 August. The Scots showed remarkable tactical coordination and resourcefulness in responding to this sudden assault, quickly regrouping and ultimately scattering Hotspur's army as well as capturing Hotspur and his younger brother Ralph. However, Earl James was killed in the fighting, pierced Froissart claims by three spears - 'one in the shoulder, another in the chest...and another in the thigh' (*l'une en l'espaule, l'autre en la poitrine...et l'autre en la cuisse*). Never one to shy away from a little melodrama, Froissart has the dying earl, surrounded and defended by his faithful followers and kinsmen, proudly state: 'Praise God, few of my ancestors have died in their bedrooms, nor in their beds.' *Loenges a Dieu, il n'est gaires de mes anciseurs qui soient mors en chambres, ne sur lits*. As fittingly chivalrous as his demise may have been, the death of Earl James - who may not yet have seen his thirtieth birthday - without legitimate offspring of his own would usher in a period of intense crisis in Scotland. Tantallon would be right at the heart of this crisis.



The charming illustration of the Battle of Otterburn on an interpretation board near the site of the battle. A remarkable victory for the Scots, the death of James, 2nd earl of Douglas, in the fighting did wonders for the family's reputation for chivalric accomplishment both within Scotland and abroad. However, it also sparked a crisis in Scotland, both for the kingdom in general and for his dependants in particular, in which Tantallon would play a major role. Image source: Yours truly.



A modern reconstruction of Bothwell Castle - preferred residence of Archibald 'the Grim', 3rd earl of Douglas - as it might have looked in the late fourteenth- or early fifteenth-centuries. The entail by which Archibald inherited the primary Douglas estates in 1388-1389 was probably originally drawn up to improve the standing of Sir William Douglas of Lothian within the wider Douglas kindred, and may not have been well-known in the 1380s, except to Archibald and his closest kin. Image source: <https://blog.historicenvironment.scot/2019/11/the-black-douglases/>

A Game of Thrones: Tantallon in an age of political crisis, 1388-1424

With Earl James now dead, the question of who should inherit his widespread lands, impressive titles, and huge and far-reaching political affinity. The answer was not as straightforward as might be expected. The most obvious candidate was the earl's brother-in-law Sir Malcolm Drummond, who had married Earl James's sister Isabella at an uncertain date (possibly between 1363 and 1369, when Malcolm's aunt Margaret was Queen of Scots). This would have suited Carrick particularly well, since Drummond was also Carrick's brother-in-law through Drummond's sister Annabella. Drummond was an influential figure among James's affinity and an experienced war leader, and his succession would ensure that all of the late earl's possessions, and most importantly his extensive political networks, remained intact. This had been and would continue to be critical to the survival of Carrick's hold on the office of guardian. However, Drummond was not the only contender. In the wake of Otterburn, Archibald the Grim quickly emerged as an alternative candidate for the lion's share of the Douglas inheritance. As a bastard - in more or less every sense of the

word - Archibald had no obvious legal right to inherit any of his relatives' possessions. But he now produced an entail (a special legal document concerning inheritance) that had been drawn up in 1342, by which men were to be preferred over women in those estates the senior branch of the kindred had accrued to that point. This in effect placed Archibald, who was personally named in the entail, above Isabella in the line of succession, circumventing her claim and - by extension - that of her husband. The entail may not have been well known among the Scottish political community, and may even have been largely forgotten by the Douglas earls themselves, but it provided a powerful legal challenge to Carrick's preferred candidate as the new earl of Douglas.



Doune Castle in Menteith, built for Robert Stewart, earl of Menteith and Fife in the late fourteenth-century. Following the death of the second earl of Douglas at Otterburn, Tantallon technically became Earl Robert's property. However, Countess Margaret retained physical possession of Tantallon, and exploited this to secure valuable concessions from him. Image source: <https://visitscotland.com/info/see-do/doune-castle-p254201>

Aside from the legal strength of his claim, Archibald had other qualities that gave him an edge over Drummond. While Drummond had gained considerable martial experience in service to his father-in-law William and brother-in-law James, Archibald had a military career that stretched back into the Second War of Scottish Independence, even longer in fact than the first and second earls. As Lord of Galloway and successor to the Murrays of Bothwell and Petty through his wife Joanna, Archibald had an extensive armed following of his own, which already overlapped in some areas with that of the late Earl James. In the months that followed Otterburn, Archibald used this substantial armed following to physically occupy the disputed territories, while his long-standing ally James Douglas of Dalkeith exploited this opportunity to press his claim to the lordship of Liddesdale as well. Significantly, regardless of his illegitimacy, Archibald had the surname 'Douglas' and could thus present himself to Earl James's erstwhile supporters as offering continuity with his legendary father 'the Good' Sir James. Perhaps most importantly, Archibald had the backing of another powerful figure in the royal administration - Carrick's brother, Robert Stewart, earl of Fife. Fife's interest in the Douglas inheritance was not out of some altruistic desire to see the proper legal succession was adhered to, of course. Fife, who had been lord chamberlain (the kingdom's chief financial officer) since 1382, recognised that the break-up of the earl of Douglas's political affinity, coupled with Carrick's newfound physical infirmity, would sound the death knell for his elder brother's

guardianship. Since their father was not getting any younger, the obvious response from the community of the realm would be to make the next most senior figure in the royal family - i.e., Fife - guardian in his stead.

In order to effectively intervene in the struggle over the Douglas inheritance and ensure his candidate emerged victorious, Fife would need a base in southern Scotland from which to intrude his personal authority into the region where the conflict was focused. In theory, Tantallon Castle was the perfect location for such a base. As noted above, the first earl held the barony of North Berwick, on which Tantallon was built, from Fife. Following the second earl's death both the barony and the castle should have reverted to Fife's ownership. However, there was one major barrier to Fife's enjoyment of his rights at Tantallon - Countess Margaret. On learning what had happened at Otterburn, Margaret had fortified herself at Tantallon with a small but significant group of men previously loyal to Earl James. These included Alan Lauder of the Bass (the castle's constable), Sir William Borthwick, William Lindsay of the Byres, Richard Hangangside, and her kinsmen the Sinclairs of Herdmanston, who Froissart reports were with the earl at Otterburn and may have been the ones to bring news of what had occurred to Margaret. It says something about the countess's political acumen and forceful personality that amid the crisis engulfing the Douglas affinity it was to her, rather than Drummond or Archibald or even Fife, that these men looked for leadership and protection. It seems that Margaret too had realised the usefulness of Tantallon to the ambitious earl of Fife, and she intended to exploit her physical possession of it to screw some valuable concessions from him.

As early as 18 August, less than a fortnight after Otterburn, a letter was dispatched from a general council at Linlithgow under the name of the king to the 'warden or constable of Tantallon Castle and others living and dwelling in the same castle' (*custodi seu constabulario castris de Temptaloune ac aliis existentibus et habitantibus in eodem castro*) instructing them to 'release and resign the same castle to him immediately without any excuse or raising any difficulty ... under every penalty which can occur by that cause' (*indilate liberetis et sursum reddatis sine excusatione aliqua aut alicuius difficultatis objectu...sub omni pena que exinde poterit pervenire*). Margaret held her nerve however, and on 11 December, ten days after Fife had been formally acknowledged as 'guardian of the kingdom' (*regni custodem*) by a council at Edinburgh, another letter was produced complaining of the 'impediment' (*impedimentum*) that was being



Looking east along the landward wall of Tantallon Castle from the forework of the central tower. Even a cursory appraisal of the defences at Tantallon vividly illustrates the futility of trying to assault the castle if a negotiated solution was possible, which no doubt explains Fife's actions in 1389. Image source: Yours truly.



King Robert III of Scotland and his queen Annabella Drummond, as depicted in the Forman Armorial of 1562. Robert - as earl of Carrick - relied on the second earl of Douglas and his vast affinity to maintain his authority as Guardian of Scotland from 1384-1388. Countess Margaret's fortification of Tantallon Castle with the help of some of the second earl's followers in 1388 opened a major crack in this affinity and played an important part in ending the future king's guardianship. This did not prevent the pragmatic king from mobilising Red Douglas ambitions in service of his efforts to undermine the other victors of the post-Otterburn crisis in the 1390s. Image source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Robert_III_and_Annabella_Drummond.jpg

Tantallon despite his earlier promises, forcing Margaret to seek alternative living arrangements. Some evidence of a souring of relations between Margaret and Fife may be seen in the arrangements the countess made for her son's marriage. On 24 May 1397, at Edinburgh, Margaret entered into a contract with Carrick, now King Robert III of Scotland, to marry George, who must now have been in his mid to late teens, to the king's daughter Mary. In April 1390, Robert II had died but Fife's guardianship had not ended with his brother's accession. While the atmosphere in the royal administration may have remained cooperative, King Robert clearly hoped to gain greater control over the governance of his realm than these arrangements allowed him, and he seemed to believe that his children provided him with leverage to do just that. Thus, the marriage of Mary to George likely reflected an attempt to alienate the Red Douglases from Fife's sphere of influence. The choice of the Red Douglases in particular suggests King Robert intended this as part of a wider attack on the benefactors of the crisis of 1388-1389. The marriage contract of 1397 obliged the king to confirm various recent resignations made by George's half-sister Isabella and George's cousin Sir James Sandilands of Calder, which enhanced his status as the primary heir of his father William and half-brother James. This encouraged George, who now fully emerged from his mother's custody and assumed personal control of his landed possessions, to assert himself as the rightful heir to various Douglas estates that had passed to others after his half-brother's death in 1388. George even openly attacked some of the lands belonging to James Douglas of Dalkeith.

placed in his way concerning his ownership of Tantallon. Finally, on 20 January 1389, Fife himself was at Tantallon in person and gained possession by effectively giving in to Margaret's demands. Addressing her as 'wr lufd cosyn dame Mergaret Steward, cuntes of Marr and of Angus', Fife confirmed that 'she shall not be deprived of her lodgings or liberties that she had before we came there' ('so sal nocht be removyt ovt toff na Innys na ezis that so had befor or we come thair'). Margaret, her followers, and her kin were welcome to come and go as they pleased without interference from the earl's men. Moreover, Fife promised to 'manteyn hir, hir men, hir landys and al hir possessons aganys ony that wald warng thaim'. The explicit inclusion of 'hir men' suggests that Margaret was keen to demonstrate her ability to reward those followers who had stood by her during this dangerous time and had enabled her to endure the crisis so ably. In doing so, Margaret was practicing precisely the kind of reciprocal lordship on which noble social relations were founded in late medieval Scotland. Further concessions that Margaret had secured from Fife became clear only later in the year. On 9 April, now at a full parliament at Holyrood, at which Archibald was formally acknowledged as earl of Douglas and which Drummond refused to attend because he 'feared that harm would be inflicted on his person if he should attend personally' (*quia timebat gravamen inferri persone sue si personaliter accederet*), Margaret resigned her father's earldom of Angus and lordship of Bonkyl in Berwickshire, as well as her grandmother's lordship of Abernethy in Perthshire. The next day, these were regranted to her son George, who as a minor would remain in Margaret's custody until he came of age. Like his cousin Archibald, George had now risen to the highest echelons of the Scottish aristocracy despite being born with no legal prospect of inheriting either his father or his mother's property. Through sheer brazen willpower, Margaret had founded the powerful and long-lasting magnate dynasty that would become known as the Red Douglases (contrasted with the Black Douglases, i.e., Archibald and his descendants).

Margaret was still at Tantallon on 21 November 1389, when she granted various Perthshire lands to her half-brother Sir Walter Sinclair, but thereafter all of Margaret's (admittedly fragmentary) acts were produced at either Herdmanston Castle or the nearby manor at Begbie, both of which belonged to her Sinclair kinsmen. What precisely happened to Tantallon during this period is unclear. Possibly, Margaret found the comings and goings of Fife's staff bothersome or wished to be closer still to her beloved half-brothers, and so she decided to voluntarily find new accommodation. On the other hand, Margaret may have abandoned Tantallon when her son George came of age, leaving the most lavish and prestigious residence to the new earl of Angus while she moved closer to her Sinclair kin. Certainly, the Red Douglases would continue to enjoy possession of Tantallon Castle in the centuries to come. A third, more sinister interpretation is conceivable, however. Once Fife had consolidated his position as guardian, he may have found a way to winkle Margaret out of



Falkland Palace in Fife. A meeting here between Robert Stewart, now duke of Albany, David Stewart, duke of Rothesay, and Archibald 'the Grim', 3rd earl of Douglas, saw supreme power in Scotland carved up between these three men and their allies, stymying the efforts of George Douglas, 1st earl of Angus, to assert himself as a major player in Scottish politics. Image source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Falkland_Palace_12.jpg

As it happened, any further ambitions Earl George may have harboured were neutralised by developments outwith either his or Margaret's control. Earl George's brother-in-law, David Stewart, earl of Rothesay, who was also the son and heir of Robert III, had also seen his interests promoted by the king in an effort to counterbalance Fife's influence over the Scottish government. However, in late 1398, Queen Annabella facilitated a meeting between Rothesay, Fife (who had been created duke of Albany in 1398) and Archibald the Grim at Falkland Castle at which an arrangement was made to undercut the king's growing influence to their collective advantage. Thus, in January 1399, Rothesay was appointed 'the kyngis lieutenant generally throch al the kynrike'. He was to be advised in this role by a council of twenty-one lords. Albany, Archibald the Grim, and Douglas of Dalkeith were all named on that council, but George was not. In part this may have merely



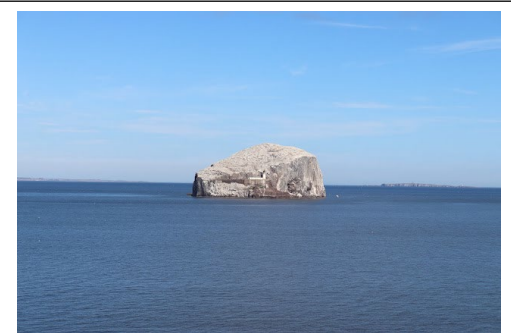
The so-called 'Bendor Stone', beside which the badly wounded Archibald, 4th earl of Douglas, was reputedly captured following the Battle of Homildon Hill in 1402. The capture of George Douglas, 1st earl of Angus, at the same battle led to another sustained period of crisis for the Red Douglases and ensured that they would remain the junior branch of the wider Douglas kindred for the next twenty years or so. Image source: <https://commons.m.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:BendorStoneHomildon.jpg#mw-jump-to-license>

reflected George's relative youth in comparison to such experienced lords. Rothesay himself was only twenty at the time of his appointment as lieutenant, and George was likely younger even than that. By comparison, Albany and Douglas of Dalkeith had political careers that stretched back to the 1360s, while Archibald had been politically active since the 1340s! However, Earl George's exclusion from the council meant that he now lacked the level of influence over the royal administration that his chief rivals boasted, and a controlling hand in the settlement of the outstanding questions over the rightful Douglas succession was

surely part of the price Archibald had demanded for his support for Rothesay's seizure of power. Thus, a settlement was negotiated that saw the lordship of Liddesdale ceded to George but other disputed estates being retained by Douglas of Dalkeith. The relationship between Rothesay and Archibald was consolidated further in 1400 by the marriage of the duke to Archibald's daughter Mary, ensuring that the Black Douglases now also had a deeper personal connection to the royal family than George could manage. After 1399, George was thus forced to accept a junior position within the wider Douglas kindred. This would ultimately bring him even greater disaster when, in September 1402, Archibald the Grim's son and successor Archibald, 4th earl of Douglas, led him to defeat and capture at the Battle of Homildon Hill. George would remain in English custody until his death, possibly of plague, probably in early 1403.

George's demise was no doubt deeply upsetting for Margaret, who had after all put herself through such hardship and risk to secure his position as earl of Angus. George and Mary's marriage had produced a child, a son named William (the choice of name, surely in reference to George's father, is further evidence that the relationship between Margaret and the late Earl William was a happy and loving one). Since the young William can only have been born between 1397 and 1402, he was still a child, more likely an infant, when he succeeded to his father's earldom and lordships. William's interests would thus be attended to by his formidable grandmother Margaret, as had happened with his father after 1384. Her remarkable influence over the Lothian lords who had formed the fighting core of the first and second earl of Douglas's followings would have been essential to this. Meanwhile, royal politics continued to barrel onwards, soon drawing the owners of Tantallon back into its tangled webs. The death of Queen Annabella in 1401 caused the relationship between Rothesay and Albany to break down catastrophically, resulting in the death of Rothesay in early 1402. Rothesay's brother-in-law Archibald, 4th earl of Douglas, allowed himself to be bought off, rather than assisting the imprisoned duke or seeking vengeance for his death, with *de facto* control over Scottish foreign policy, which in turn led to the embarrassing debacle at Homildon Hill. As well as Earl Archibald and Earl George, a substantial number of Black Douglas and Albany Stewart adherents were also captured in that battle. This significantly undermined the manpower available to Scotland's two most influential magnate dynasties and consequently encouraged Robert III to make another attempt to expand his control over the royal administration, once again using his children as leverage. Thus, in 1404, he granted the earldom of Carrick - associated with the heir to the Scottish kingship since the early fourteenth-century - and the traditional Stewart lands around the Firth of Clyde to his remaining son James, who would have turned ten that year. King Robert also packed the young James's household with his own chief councillors, mostly notably Sir David Fleming and Henry Sinclair, 2nd earl of Orkney.

If the surname of the earl of Orkney sounds familiar, it should. He was of course a relative of the Sinclairs of Herdmanston, and through them of Countess Margaret and her grandson William. Indeed, the first earl had assisted Earl George in his attacks on the Lothian possessions of James Douglas of Dalkeith in the 1390s. As King Robert hoped to use his son James's status as future King of Scots to increase his influence over the Scottish government, so Fleming and Orkney looked to exploit their effective custody of the young man to further their own lordly ambitions and



Bass Rock, as seen from Tantallon Castle. The gannet colony that dominates the island now gives a somewhat misleading impression of what a miserable place the Rock would have been when the future King James I and his guardian Henry Sinclair hid out there from their Black and Red Douglas enemies in 1406. Nevertheless, it must have felt like a fairly desperate time for the pair, even from the comfort of the castle that was situated on the Rock until the early twentieth-century. Image source: Yours truly.



The ruins of Rosslyn Castle in Midlothian. Henry Sinclair, 2nd earl of Orkney and lord of Rosslyn, was a distant kinsman of Countess Margaret but would prove to be a dangerous enemy of the Red Douglases in the early years of the fifteenth-century. Image source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rosslyn_Castle_-_geograph.org.uk_-_2897320.jpg

considerable sway over the local notables who had come to her aid in 1388-1389, having continued to bestow patronage on them in the years since, and she likely summoned them to protect her rights as she had done nearly two decades earlier. Before she was forced to face another tense stand-off at Tantallon however, Margaret received additional support from a source that she may not have anticipated. As Orkney and Fleming approached her powerbase in East Lothian, James Douglas, lord of Balvenie and younger brother Archibald, 4th earl of Douglas, who had been administering his elder brother's business in Scotland since Homildon Hill, issued forth from Edinburgh Castle with a sizeable force of Black Douglas adherents. It seems that Balvenie had recognised the



A statue of King James I of Scotland on the facade of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery on Queen Street in Edinburgh. The personal reign of James I saw a marked improvement in the fortunes of the Red Douglases thanks to the close relationship between King James and his nephew William Douglas, 2nd earl of Angus. During James's reign, Tantallon played an active part in the king's efforts to vigorously enforce his personal authority over the great magnates of the kingdom, repeatedly serving as a prison in which to confine aristocrats who had fallen afoul of royal policy. Image source: Yours truly.

expedition into the Lothians as a threat to not just to Red Douglas interests but to Douglas interests in the south-east more generally and had decided to respond with a potent demonstration of how dangerous the Black Douglas affinity could be even after the reversal it had suffered in 1402. Orkney and Fleming now found themselves sandwiched between Balvenie's formidable army to the west and whatever forces Margaret had been able to assemble in the east. Having dispatched Orkney and James to the relative safety of Bass Castle, Fleming hastily led his army south and west, hoping to circumvent Balvenie's forces and escape. He was overtaken at Hermiston Moor however, his army was defeated, and he himself was killed. Orkney and James remained in hiding on the Bass Rock for a month, within sight of Tantallon Castle. While it remains uncertain whether she had access to the castle at this point or not, it is tempting to imagine Margaret and her wee grandson (William can have been no more than nine at the time) looking out towards the Bass Rock from the large windows along the western wall of the great hall at Tantallon, contemplating recent events and trying to calculate how the situation might be resolved.

In the end, Orkney and James were able to board a passing ship - the *Maryenknyght* - and sail for France, apparently hoping to avoid James ultimately falling into the hands of his uncle Albany. The contemporary chronicler Walter Bower, Abbot of Inchcolm, claims that the plan to dispatch James to France had been in development for a while, but if it was it must have been hastened by the events surrounding Hermiston Moor. Before reaching safety on the Continent, the *Maryenknyght* was captured by English pirates and both Orkney and James were presented to King Henry IV of England as prisoners. James would remain a

interests. For Orkney, this seems to have focused his attention on the Lothians. His influence there was easier for him to assert than in his northern earldom anyway, and power in the region had been particularly disrupted by the personnel captured at Homildon Hill in 1402. Orkney himself was among those taken prisoner at the battle but he had since been able to negotiate his release. Moreover, the youth of the current earl of Angus must surely have made him seem a tempting target to the acquisitive earl. As a senior kinsman of the young earl, Orkney may have felt it his natural right to assume custody of the boy and administer his earldom while William was a minor. He might even have been able to convince King Robert that this was in the interest of the crown as well, since young Earl William was also Robert III's grandson, William's mother Mary being the king's daughter after all. Thus, in February 1406, Fleming and Orkney led an armed force into the Lothians, bringing the twelve-year-old James with them to give their actions added legitimacy, their aim apparently being to demonstrate their own strength within the region and intimidate Margaret into handing her grandson over to Orkney.

However, Orkney and Fleming grossly overestimated their own strength and wildly underestimated Countess Margaret's resilience. The countess still had



A detail of the processional frieze in the entrance hall of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery on Queen Street in Edinburgh, showing some of the key figures in Scottish politics from the late fourteenth- and early fifteenth-centuries. It is a testament to the relatively limited influence of the Red Douglases during this period that no member of the family appears in the frieze until the second half of the fifteenth-century. The individual here identified simply as 'Douglas' may be intended to represent James, 2nd earl of Douglas, given his position relative to the other figures. However, interpretation at the gallery identifies him as Archibald 'the Grim', and he is wearing a coat of arms that was actually only ever used by Archibald's son - Archibald, 4th earl of Douglas. Image source: <https://nationalgalleries.org/art-and-artists/159703/processional-frieze-great-hall-scottish-national-portrait-gallery>

captive in England for fully eighteen years, during which time Albany would continue to lead the Scottish royal administration with the title 'governor of the kingdom of Scotland' (*regni Scotie gubernatoris*). During this governorship, Margaret and her grandson's rights would be preserved, a recognition both of their inoffensiveness to the Albany regime and, more importantly, the value of Margaret's political connections in maintaining stability within the earl of Angus's sphere of influence. Margaret's last known act was produced on 4 January 1416, making concessions in Berwickshire to the cathedral church at Durham. This was done not at Tantallon but 'at Begbie near Herdmanston' (*apud Bagby iuxta Hyrderaanstone*). By now, Margaret would have been in her sixties and her grandson William would have been approaching his twentieth birthday and perhaps already personally administering his earldom and occupying Tantallon. There can be little doubt that William's fortunes were in a strong position, far stronger than they would have been if not for his grandmother's strenuous efforts in defence of her family's interests over the previous decades. The next significant development in Tantallon's story would come with the release of James, now King James I of Scotland, from English captivity in 1424. Margaret would not live to see this, but her grandson would be one of the major beneficiaries of this turn of events.

The (belated) Return of the King: Tantallon in the reign of James I, 1424-1437

Although Margaret had maintained the integrity of her grandson's landed interests, there was no escaping the fact that the main victors of the crisis of 1406 were the Albany Stewarts and their Black Douglas allies. For the time being, the Red Douglases would continue to be the junior partners in the wider Douglas kindred. Margaret's acknowledgement of this fact can be seen in her arrangement of a marriage between her grandson William and Margaret, a daughter of Sir William Hay of Lochariot. Hay was a prominent member of the fourth earl of Douglas's affinity, a regular witness of the earl's *acta*, and twice served as a hostage for the earl during his periods of parole from English captivity in 1405 and 1407. Discussions for the wedding began in December 1409, shortly after the fourth earl had returned to Scotland from England, and seems to have taken place around 12 December 1410, on which date Margaret received £100 in connection with the marriage. Nonetheless, the young Earl William - who may have been as young as thirteen at the time of his marriage - no doubt harboured hopes that at some point he would succeed in turning this state of affairs on its head and restoring his branch of the family to the dominant position they had been in from 1347-1388. The lavish surroundings of Tantallon Castle no doubt served as a reminder of the benefits that came with such status and must have fuelled Earl William's ambitions. When the chance came, he seized it with both hands.

In April 1424, James I returned to Scotland after an enforced absence of eighteen years. Unsurprisingly, after such a long time in captivity, King James was eager to vigorously reassert his personal authority over his kingdom, just as David II had been after 1341 and 1357. Earl William was quick to assist him in this aim. William's role as one of the king's key agents was facilitated by the fact that he was James's nephew through his mother Mary (James's sister). The first target of James's ire was the Albany Stewarts. The king's uncle Robert had died in 1420, but Robert's son Murdac had inherited both the duchy and the office of governor. When the king levelled (frankly dubious) charges of treason against Murdac and his sons in May 1425, Earl William sat on the assize that condemned them to death by beheading. Moreover, Murdac's wife Isabella, heiress to the earldom of Lennox, was imprisoned at Tantallon Castle until around 1433 in an effort to neutralise the threat she might pose to King James's establishment of his own authority in Lennox. Modern interpretation at the castle claims she was held in the basement of the Douglas Tower, but she may have been confined to one of the more salubrious rooms in the eastern tower.

Next, King James turned his attention to undermining the influence of the Black Douglases. He was assisted in this by the fact that the formidable fourth earl had been killed - along with a substantial portion of his affinity - at the Battle of Verneuil in August 1424, only a few months after James's release from English imprisonment. While his successor Archibald, 5th earl of Douglas, was also the king's nephew (the fourth earl had been married to another of James's sisters, Margaret), the enormous political networks the fourth earl had constructed during James's captivity gave contemporary English commentator John Shirley the impression that during James's absence 'th'erille Douglas both governe and reule over this syde the Scottische see [i.e., south of the River Forth]'. This was an obvious challenge to the king's ambitions to restore royal authority and prestige. King James may also have harboured personal resentments about the role the Black Douglases had played in provoking his desperate flight to France in 1406, which had led to his lengthy captivity in the first place. Much as in the 1360s, when Archibald the Grim had provided David II with a useful alternate focus of authority within the wider Douglas affinity to undermine the influence of Earl William's grandfather and namesake, so promoting Earl William's interests served as a means by which King James could bleed support away from the Black Douglas earl. Thus, in 1424, Earl William's ally William Wedderburn was confirmed as guardian of the young John Swinton, son and heir of a Black Douglas adherent killed at Verneuil. In January 1428, James intervened to have Earl William recognised as 'special protector and defender' of Coldingham Priory, a role previously fulfilled by Alexander Hume on behalf of the fourth earl of Douglas until both men were killed in 1424. Perhaps most strikingly, around 1430 James appointed Earl William warden of the East and Middle Marches, handing him the leading role in warfare and diplomacy along most of the Anglo-Scottish border.



The 'Beheading Stone' outside Stirling Castle. This was reputedly where Murdac Stewart, duke of Albany, and his sons were executed in 1425, after being found guilty of treason by an assize that included William Douglas, 2nd earl of Angus. Murdac's wife did not share in the grisly fate of her husband and their children, but was instead imprisoned at Tantallon Castle. Image source: <https://my.stirling.gov.uk/services/tourism-and-visitor-attractions/historic-sites/beheading-stone>

The king's promotion of his favoured nephew's interests in the south served to alienate not only the fifth earl, but also George Dunbar, earl of March. As intimidated earlier, the earls of March were natural rivals of the Douglases in the south-east. Dunbar - whose father had led the Scots to victory at Otterburn after the death of Earl William's uncle - grew so frustrated over the situation that in 1434 he turned to the English crown to seek redress against what he claimed was sharp practice by his rightful ruler. Dunbar probably hoped that the threat of renewed conflict with England would be sufficient to frighten King James into offering concessions, but instead he merely handed Earl William an opportunity to exercise the kind of militarised border lordship that had been the key to Douglas power for the past 130 years. In September 1435, Earl William defeated Dunbar and a sizeable force of borderers (*marchiani*) at the Battle of Piperdean near Cockburnspath, reinforcing his position as the predominant Scottish war leader in the south.



Loch Leven Castle near Kinross. Earl William's Black Douglas counterpart - Archibald, 5th earl of Douglas - spent around two months imprisoned here in 1431 over his attempted inference in a dispute in favour of his kinsman Sir John Kennedy. Though both Archibald and William were the king's nephews, the latter received much more favourable treatment from King James. Image source: <https://blog.historicalenvironment.scot/2020/05/lochleven-prison->

and 'contemptuously burned' Inverness in retaliation for his earlier humiliation. Earl William and his sizeable military following accompanied King James north and witnessed Macdonald's surrender to the king without a battle at Lochaber. The earl was also present for Macdonald's humiliating submission to King James at Holyrood, was one of the 'important lords of the kingdom [who] interceded for him', and allowed King James to use Tantallon as a prison for Macdonald from 1429-1431.

William's fidelity to his uncle continued even after King James was assassinated in February 1437. Indeed, his martial experience and formidable armed following were critical in bringing the subsequent crisis to a swift conclusion. When his aunt Queen Joan, who had been injured during the attack on her husband, withdrew south to Edinburgh, Earl William mustered his forces and led the armed expedition north to bring the king's assassins to justice. It was to William that the ringleader of the plot against his uncle, the late King James's own uncle Walter Stewart, Earl of Atholl, surrendered. Atholl's decision to surrender without a fight may have reflected the ferocious reputation of Earl William and his armed followers in combat. Earl William was likely also present for the coronation of his cousin the six-year-old James II on 25 March at Holyrood Abbey, witnessing the first coronation of a King of Scots at a location other than Scone. He would surely also have been present for the general council at Stirling in May at which Archibald, 5th Earl of Douglas, was appointed lieutenant-general of the realm, with a remit to govern Scotland until James II came of age. It is not clear



A view across the area where the Battle of Piperdean was likely fought in 1435. Victory at Piperdean not only confirmed the second earl of Angus as the premier war leader in southern Scotland during James I's reign, it also reinforced his local dominance over the Dunbars, who had been rivals of the Douglases for influence in southern Scotland since the mid fourteenth-century. Image source: Yours truly.

Earl William even provided valuable assistance in pursuit of his uncle's ambitions in the north. On breaking Albany Stewart power in

1425, King James effectively inherited a long-running dispute between the dukes of Albany and the Macdonald Lords of the Isles over the earldom of Ross. The Macdonald claim to the earldom rested on the marriage of Donald Macdonald to Mary or Mariota, daughter of Euphemia, countess of Ross in her own right. Donald and Mary's son Alexander sat on the assize that condemned Duke Murdac and his relatives alongside Earl William, apparently hoping that the downfall of the Albany Stewarts would see the king recognise Macdonald rights in Ross in return. Instead, the acquisitive King James sought to retain the earldom - and, critically, its revenues - for the crown. After Macdonald, and his mother, and a substantial portion of his local allies were lured to an assembly at Inverness and summarily arrested, the affronted Lord of the Isles quickly broke the promises of good behaviour that had secured his release



The ruined nave at Holyrood Abbey in Edinburgh. The second earl of Douglas is known to have been present here on at least two notable occasions - the humiliating submission of Alexander Macdonald, Lord of the Isles, to King James I in August 1429, and the coronation of his cousin King James II of Scotland in March 1437. Image source: Yours truly.

whether or not Earl William supported this appointment, but it seems unlikely. Earl Archibald's appointment came at the expense of Queen Joan, who Earl William had rushed to the aid of earlier in the year. William had associated himself with the queen not merely because of their familial relationship but because she represented his best hope for a continuation of the late king's policies that had so benefited him in recent years. Earl Archibald on the other hand represented a more conservative choice, being both a man and not English, unlike Joan. He also offered a break with the old king's policies, which - while not unpopular enough to get the Scottish political community to side with his assassins - had been a source of widespread dissatisfaction among much of the nobility. That Earl William preferred Joan over Archibald is strongly suggested by the actions of his successors, and it would be up to them to shape Red Douglas policy soon enough, as the seemingly fit and healthy earl died unexpectedly in October 1437, being no more than around forty.

Fortune's Wheel Turns: Red Douglasses vs Black Douglasses, 1437-1463

Earl William was succeeded by his eldest son James, now third earl of Angus, who would have been in his early to mid-twenties when he inherited Tantallon and the rest of his father's possessions. The third earl was however almost entirely swept along by events around him. He likely supported Queen Joan's efforts to use her wardship of the young James II to increase her influence over the governance of the realm following the unexpected death of the fifth earl of Douglas in June 1439. However, he was apparently powerless to intervene when Joan was arrested by Sir James Livingston of Callendar at Stirling Castle in August and forced to surrender custody of her son in return for her freedom. Some effort may have been made to draw Earl James into governmental circles - or at least away from the queen's affinity - with a proposed marriage between the earl and James II's sister Joanna in October 1440, but this marriage is not known to have taken place. It is unlikely that he had any part in or knowledge of the conspiracy surrounding the so-called 'Black Dinner' the following month, which delivered control of the royal council, and by extension the royal administration itself, to the chancellor William, lord Crichton, and his allies. When the architects of the Black Dinner began fighting amongst themselves again in 1443, Earl James once more sided with Queen Joan, who apparently hoped that the dissension between her political opponents would provide an opportunity for her to reassert her control. However, both she and James apparently grossly underestimated the military force his Black Douglas kinsmen could bring to bear in pursuit of their aims as well as the political power that possession of the young King James gave

to their allies the Livingstons. Thus, on 1 July 1445, while Queen Joan and Earl James were besieged by Black Douglas forces at Dunbar Castle, a parliament at Edinburgh (where the Black Douglasses were simultaneously besieging Crichton) found Earl James guilty of 'cryme committit til his [i.e., James II's] majeste and rebellion' - that is, treason. Earl James was given a year and a day to present himself to the king - and, of course, the king's custodians - and to submit to his judgment or else forfeit 'al and sindry the movablez gudis, landis and possessions'. After Queen Joan died at Dunbar on 15 July, the third earl and Joan's remaining allies made terms with the Black Douglasses and the Livingstons, allowing him to retain his property and titles in return for accepting their dominance over James II's minority government.



The fragmentary remains of Dunbar Castle in East Lothian. The third earl of Angus was present at Dunbar when Joan Beaufort died under siege there in 1445, and he was shortly after compelled to surrender along with the rest of Joan's dwindling supporters. Image source:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Dunbar_Castle_-_geograph.org.uk_-_1690820.jpg



A view eastwards along the landward wall at Tantallon Castle, with the ruined Douglas Tower in the foreground. It is likely in the Douglas Tower that the third earl of Angus died in late 1445. Image source: Yours truly.

To some extent, Earl James was merely unfortunate to find himself facing such overwhelming opposition as that which the ascendant Black Douglasses were able to summon in the 1440s. Perhaps had he survived beyond September 1445, he might have been able to mount a recovery. As it was, it was his brother George who became the fourth earl and inherited - along with the lands and titles and splendid castle at Tantallon - the responsibility to revive Red Douglas fortunes. George's initial strategy in this regard was to avoid the kind of firm political entanglements that had led his brother into open confrontation with some of the most powerful and dangerous magnates of his generation. The fourth earl made appearances at court during James II's minority but was never closely associated with the Livingstons, who dominated the royal council after 1445. Thus, when James II assumed personal authority over the governance of the realm in 1449 and quickly turned against the Livingstons, Earl George avoided being caught up in their downfall. He also assisted his Black Douglas kin in the prosecution of war with England, for example accompanying Hugh Douglas, earl of Ormond and younger brother of William, 8th earl of Douglas, in an attack on Alnwick in 1448 of which the contemporary Auchinleck chronicler says

approvingly: 'angus and ormond brnyt awnwick in the moneth of lunij the thrid day and come hame wele and did gret scaith [i.e., damage]'

But when King James turned his ire on the Black Douglasses, Earl George was quick to associate himself with the crown again. It is unclear whether he joined in the king's initial (and frankly desultory) assault on Black Douglas interests in 1450, but after King James killed William, 8th earl of Douglas, at Stirling in February 1452, the fourth earl seized upon the crisis that followed as an opportunity to pursue his personal ambitions and undermine the position of his family rivals. He was present at the parliament that King James summoned at Edinburgh in June 1452 and on 12 June George assented to the king's absolution from any wrongdoing in the grisly events of February. Earl George's price for his part in preserving the king's reputation became clear on 30 June, when King James formally granted Tantallon to him and erected the surrounding lands into the barony of Tantallon (*baroniam de Temptaloune*). In purely practical terms, this grant changed little. As we have seen, Tantallon had served as the primarily residence of the Red Douglas earls of Angus for decades, probably since Countess Margaret had secured residency rights there in 1389. However, it had legally remained the property of the earls of Fife, and when James I had forfeited the Albany Stewarts in 1425, the lands on which Tantallon was built would have been among those taken back into the possession of the crown. Thus, the Red Douglasses' rights to their most impressive and formidable castle had been contingent on the forbearance of others, a fact that must have been particularly nerve-wracking during those years when the royal administration had been dominated by their political opponents. The grant of 1452 ended this awkward arrangement and allowed the fourth earl to fully integrate Tantallon into his landed possessions. Much like his father in the reign of James I, Earl George found his interests being promoted by a belligerent monarch as a means to undermine the dominant branch of the Douglas kindred.



A view westwards along the landward wall from the central tower at Tantallon Castle. Again, the poor random person who got snapped in this gives a striking sense of the sheer scale of Tantallon. Image source: Yours truly.

It seems highly likely that Earl George took part in King James's cack-handed and counterproductive campaign through the Black Douglas estates in the summer of 1452, for all the good that did either George or James. But when the king launched his final assault on the Black Douglasses in 1455, the fourth earl was again militarily active on King James's behalf. Leadership of the 'royalist' army that broke the last vestiges of Black Douglas military power at the Battle of Arkinholm in May 1455 has traditionally been attributed to Earl George, and he was certainly one of the main beneficiaries of the Black Douglasses' downfall. George received the lordship of Douglas, which would not have been especially lucrative in material terms. However, as the 'original' Douglas lordship, it offered a major boost in his prestige and confirmed him as the senior figure within the wider Douglas kindred. He sought to consolidate this position by forming bonds of manrent with former Black Douglas adherents, most notably James, lord Hamilton, whose timely 'defection' to the crown in 1455 played a significant part in the ultimate collapse of Black Douglas resistance. In the years after 1455, the fourth earl also sought to practice the highly-militarised border

lordship that had been key to Douglas success since the early fourteenth-century. In 1456, he successfully defended his lands in the south-east from a raid led by Henry Percy, earl of Northumberland, and the exiled James, 9th earl of Douglas. The earl also seems to have played a prominent role in King James's ambitious campaign to retake Roxburgh and Berwick-upon-Tweed - the only Scottish strongholds ceded in 1357 not to have been recovered in the 1370s and 1380s - from the English in summer 1460. Ahead of this enterprise, King James even bought Earl George a 'pair of arms' (*pare armorum*) in anticipation of this mammoth undertaking. However, while the Scots were besieging Roxburgh, the king was killed when one of the cannons - cutting-edge technology that both he and his father had been fascinated by - accidentally exploded. If the seventeenth-century Douglas family panegyricist David Hume of Godscroft is to be believed, the fourth earl was also injured in the same explosion, although if he was it cannot have been badly.



Alnwick Castle in Northumberland. One of the primary residences of the English earls of Northumberland, it was attacked by the fourth earl of Angus - in conjunction with Hugh Douglas, earl of Ormond - in 1448. Fifteen years later, the fourth earl found himself rescuing the Lancastrian garrison there from a Yorkist siege. Image source: Yours truly.

In the aftermath of the king's death, his queen Mary of Guelders moved with remarkable speed and clarity of purpose to establish her control over the royal administration. Perhaps learning from the bitter experience of her predecessor Joan, Mary not only swiftly assumed custody of her son, the eight-year-old James III, but also brought him to Roxburgh, exploiting the fact that a substantial portion of the political community would be present in the army to have them formally acknowledge the younger James as the new king and her as his guardian. Once

Roxburgh has fallen, Mary led the army - including Earl George - to nearby Kelso Abbey for a hastily arranged coronation ceremony for her young son. The impression that this was a somewhat ad hoc affair is suggested by Hume of Godscroft's claim that during the coronation the fourth earl stepped forward and seized the crown, personally placing it on the young king's head and daring any of those present to challenge the wee Jame's rights as king. If this crass display of public loyalty occurred, it was not a sign that Earl George intended to cleave faithfully to the queen dowager the way his brother had done during the previous minority. Indeed, the fourth earl should be counted among

the 'old lordes' who acted as parliamentary opposition to Mary's policies. Mary shared her husband's ambition to restore the border as it had been before the Wars of Independence began in the late thirteenth-century, but chose to pursue this in an unconventional and ingenious way. A bitter dynastic struggle - now known as the Wars of the Roses - had gripped England since 1455, with the rival Houses of Lancaster and York vying for the kingship. In early 1461, Mary invited the beleaguered Lancastrian king Henry VI and his queen Margaret of Anjou into Scotland, offering them material support against the ascendant Yorkists in return for the surrender of Berwick back into Scottish hands. Once Mary had packed Berwick with her own troops however, the crafty queen ditched Henry and Margaret and sought a separate peace deal with the Yorkist king Edward IV. Unfortunately for Mary, the Lancastrians continued to receive the vocal support of the French crown, who valued continued civil war in England over the security of the Anglo-Scottish border.

This, coupled with Earl George's natural desire for continued border warfare to justify his status as the preminent war leader in the marches, was more than enough



A not-particularly-fantastic photo of William Brassey Hole's wall painting of the presentation of James III to the Scottish nobility at the Siege of Roxburgh in 1460, at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery on Queen Street in Edinburgh. The fourth earl of Angus is the figure to the right of the image with his sword drawn and the tip pointed deferentially towards the ground. Image source: Yours truly

motivation for the earl to continue to press for continued Scottish assistance to the Lancastrian cause. Henry and Margaret drew up a private - though not secret - indenture with the fourth earl, promising him 2,000 marks of land between the River Humber and the River Trent, which would be granted with a ducal title, raising him to the highest attainable aristocratic rank in either kingdom. When the 'old lordes' were finally able to strongarm Mary into offering military support for the Lancastrians in January 1463, it was Earl George himself who led troops across the border to relieve the Yorkist siege of Alnwick, ironically a castle that he himself had attacked in 1448. The earl died on 12 March 1463, and the sheer inanity of abandoning Mary's pragmatic foreign policy meant that Scotland's pro-Lancastrian stance did not long outlive him. To Hume of Godscroft, George was 'the Great Earl', and to an extent this reputation is deserved. He had elevated the Red Douglases to their greatest influence to date, both in terms of territory and prestige. While some of this had come through either dumb luck or studious inaction on his part, he had proven himself able to recognise chances for advancement when they came and shown a willingness to exploit these opportunities when they arose. He had also demonstrated a talent for the warlike border lordship that had allowed the Douglases to dominate Lowland politics since the reign of Robert I. His son and great-grandson, the next two earls of Angus, would further increase the wealth, influence, and prestige of the Red Douglases. However, they would notably lack the Great Earl's restraint and would bring the family to the brink of disaster. This would result in Tantallon being besieged not once, but twice,

during their tenure. That, however, is probably best left for Part 2.



Fig. 10.—Seal of George Douglas, 4th Earl of Angus (1446–1463). [The Seal of James, 3rd Earl of Angus, is similar to the above (4th Earl).]

The seal of George Douglas, 4th earl of Angus. The quarters of the escutcheon are now much more varied, reflecting changes in heraldic fashion since the fourteenth-century. The arms represent, going clockwise from the top left, the earldom of Angus, the lordship of Douglas, the lordship of Abernethy, and the lordship of Bonkyl. Earl George owed three of these four - Angus, Abernethy, and Bonkyl - to his descent from the formidable Countess Margaret. Other features of the seal emphasise his descent from Margaret's paramour the first earl of Douglas, however. The swan feather helmet crest is again a feature of both Earl George's and the late Earl William's heraldic achievement. Moreover, the bucolic scene in the background is clearly a development of the floral/arboreal motifs on Earl William's seals both before and after his creation as earl. Image source: <https://www.douglashistory.co.uk/history/heraldry/seals.htm>



News From All Over



14th Annual Ormond Beach Celtic Festival Ormond Beach, FL ~ April 12-13, 2025



Marc Hitchens & Liz Tallarico with their friends Elaine Murphy and Art Turcotte

The 14th Annual Ormond Beach Celtic Festival was held on April 12-13, 2025 on the grounds of The Casements - John D. Rockefeller's winter home. Clan Douglas proudly returned to our usual place along Clan Row. Great weather all weekend – about 10° cooler than normal made for a pleasant day to be outside.

Helping me, my wife Mona in the tent were our usual cast of characters: past Regent Marc Hitchens and his companion Liz Tallarico along with Mark and Sally Hill. I greatly appreciate their assistance to make this another successful event. We welcomed 3 new members – Mariah Azevedo, Rachel Secrist, and Betty Stecker. Great to have them on board!

We tried a new electronic sign-in form. Visitors were able to access the form via a QR code on their own phone. This enabled them to quickly enter their information. This greatly facilitates capturing their data and I no longer have to decipher handwriting. I look forward to using this system again at our next event.

This concludes another successful Games season in Central Florida. We'll be back on January 17-18, 2026 for the Central Florida Highland Games. Please come join us if you are in the area.

Aye,
Jeff Sparks, Central Florida Regent



New member Rachel Secrist with her husband James



Ready to step out for the Clan Parade: Life Member Mark Hill, Past North Florida Regent Marc Hitchens, Liz Tallarico, Life Member Sally Hill, Life Member & Central Florida Regent Jeff Sparks



New member Mariah Azevedo (right) with her mom, member Lorena Slade

Piping on the Green, Celtic Music and Arts Festival Tullahoma, Tennessee ~ April 5, 2025

Since 2013, the Highland Rim Scottish Society have held their annual Piping on the Green Celtic Music Festival to celebrate Tartan Day (April 6). This year was the 2nd year they have invited clans to be part of their celebration.

Clan Douglas was the first to sign-up for this event, so we got to display at spot #1 --- FORWARD! What a fantastic place to be as we were nearest everything that was going on.

While only four clans opted to join in this year, the open-air music festival in downtown Tullahoma, Tennessee was a HUGE success! Multiple musical guests played various styles of Celtic music, numerous vendors sold their wares, and several food trucks kept the large crowds fed. There was even a wee coo to pet and love on!

Oh, of course there was a Bonny Knees contest too and our own TN co-regent, Tyson won 3rd place!

We had a few CDSNA members stop by the clan tent plus several new people with a Douglas connection who all enjoyed chatting about their ancestry and sampling some homemade Scottish shortbread with us.

Although the wind was atrocious and we nearly lost the banner, a beautiful day was had by all who attended.

Tyson & Betsy Chastain
Tennessee (East) Regents



TN Regents Betsy and Tyson Chastain



Regent Tyson's 3rd place in Bonny Knees contest



Regent Betsy with a 16 month old coo

Smoky Mountain Scottish Festival Townsend, TN ~ May 17-18, 2025

The Smoky Mountain Scottish Festival in Townsend Tennessee (May 17, 18) started off very dismal as an overnight severe storm wiped out 50% of the Clans' & Vendors' pre-festival set up. Demolished canopies were strewn everywhere! Display pieces were soaked! Many items completed destroyed. Clan Douglas was not spared, both canopies were destroyed!

But Scottish determination paid off as convenors and vendors all pulled together to sort through the aftermath in the pouring rain to salvage what could be, remove debris from the area and make sure that every tent space had at least a pieced together canopy to shade a portion of their space and persevere!

The rain had stopped by the time the gates opened and hundreds of spectators flooded through with nary a notion of what we all had just accomplished in the early morning hours to collectively get every Clan and Vendor back to a semblance of our very well put together festival! FORWARD!

Clan Douglas had many visitors stop by even though we didn't have much shade to offer them this year, we did have a place to sit and offer a bit of hospitality. We had Blaylocks, Sandlins, Lockharts, Browns, Fosters, Kilgores, Kirkpatrick's, Carmichaels, Dixons and of course slews of Douglases stopping by.



TN Regents & Life Members Betsy & Tyson Chastain, Life Member Skyler Chastain and wee Abbey

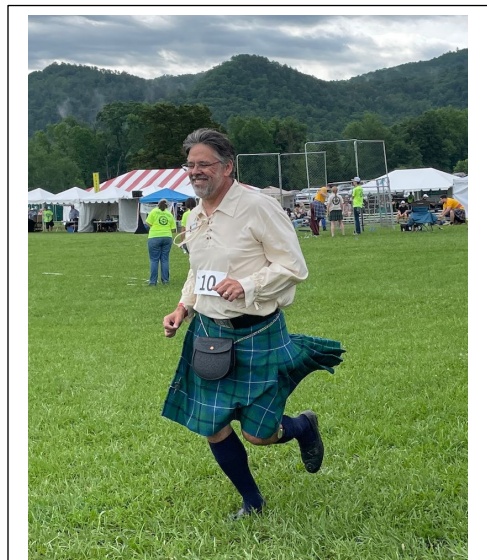


CDSNA Member Zach Breckenridge

As is typical the event held heavy athletics, dance competitions, drums & pipes competitions, musical groups, vendors and Scottish food galore!

What a fantastic time was had by all despite the shaky beginning to the weekend!

Betsy & Tyson Chastain
Tennessee (East) Regents



Regent Tyson runs the kilted mile!



The Seanor family representing their Blaylock heritage



Douglases on parade



CDSNA Member Richard Colwell representing his Kilgore heritage



Tom Douglas in the Veterans' Parade - thank you for your service!



CDSNA Treasurer Tom Douglas & Lynn with his son, granddaughter and wee great-grandies!

The St. Louis Scottish Games Manchester, Missouri ~ May 17, 2025

The St. Louis Scottish Games were held Saturday May 17 at Schroeder Park in Manchester, MO a day after a tornado swept through nearby sections of the metro area. The passing of the storm that produced the tornado ushered in clear blue skies and very lovely temperatures for the day.

Joining me in St. Louis was IL Regent Tim Kirkpatrick. We welcomed several visitors to the tent and did our best to answer all the questions posed by those recognizing a family name from our Douglas banner and those who recognized no name but were hoping to learn more about a name from their own family history. The tent was busy all day. No new or renewing members but several visitors eagerly grabbed their phones to capture the QR code for the CDSNA website.

I was especially pleased to see CDNSA member Cameron Young again and enjoyed meeting his mother and chatting with her. We also had a visit from CDSNA member George Reed (who was kind enough to take a photo and share it with me -- *Thank you, George.*)

One would think that a (former) Newsletter Editor would be all about taking photos ... but I will admit, I am probably the worst at that. Fortunately, others do take pictures and sometimes they are kind enough to share.

27 clans were represented by tents at the festival and another 5 clans marched in the clan parade (although they did not set up a tent). I very much enjoyed the arrangement of the event; the athletic field was in the center of the event surrounded by clan tents, merchants and food vendors. A walk-about throughout the peripheral tents still gave a view of the athletes.

The event has improved much over the past three years and anyone who can ... *should* attend next year and join us at the tent.

Ut tempus permittit,

Harold Edington
MO Regent & Central Region VP



Member George Reed & Regent Harold



S T . L O U I S
SCOTTISH GAMES
AND CULTURAL FESTIVAL

Alma Highland Festival and Games Alma, Michigan ~ May 23-25, 2025

Clan Doulgas returned to the 56th Annual Alma Highland Festival and Games in Alma, MI after a hiatus. Plenty of activity throughout the weekend including the Clan Parade in the stadium. It was especially great to talk to so many wonderful people who stopped by our Douglas Clan tent which was one of about twenty at the event. Unfortunately, there was only one couple with any identified connection to the Douglases and it was a good one. Rory Douglas, retired pastor, and his lovely wife Mary and I had a pleasant conversation and he was provided about Clan Membership. The next morning came one of the highlights of the weekend with Rory and Mary giving the Blessing of the Tartans and prayer Sunday morning of the weekend event. Rory wore his Ancient Douglas tie and I brought a Modern Douglas scarf so we had two tartans covered.



Overall, a great weekend at Alma and spreading the positive word about Clan Douglas and us being out and about again in Michigan. I'm working on bringing even more items and other adjustments for our second event on July 11-12 at Celtic Festival in the Saline/Ann Arbor, MI area. The Outlaw King Movie poster will return as it was a big hit among festival goers. We look forward to seeing any current Clan members and potential new ones this July in Saline.

Randal Chancellor
Michigan Regent



The Blessing of the Tartans Ceremony. L to R: Unknown Piper, Rory and Mary Douglas presiding and Alma Highland Official Malcolm Frisbie

Gallabrae, Greenville Scottish Games Greenville, South Carolina ~ May 22-23, 2025

Greetings from the Greenville, SC Gallabrae!

The Greenville games continue to grow. Last year was the first time Clan Douglas was represented. The games had approximately 50 clans. This year, the games have grown to 68 clans.

The games start with a Parade of the Clans down Main Street from S Main & Broad approximately one-half mile, ending in front of the Hyatt Regency on Beattie Pl. Last year's parade included myself and my daughter representing Clan Douglas. This year we tripled that number!

The games themselves featured eight members of the 2nd Scots Guards, one of five regiments of the British army charged with guarding the King of England, those guys with the red coats and big black fuzzy hats, called a Shako (originally made from the pelt of the Canadian brown bear.) We also had skydivers who came down carrying the Saltire and the US flag with the mass pipe band playing each anthem in turn.

Clan Douglas had ten visitors signing the electronic guest registry and one person signed up for a one-year membership on the spot!

We also were represented on the pitch by Katy Morton Larsen and our own Sam Thayer. Both recorded personal records at this event. Congratulations Katy and Sam!

Curtis Rowell
South Carolina Regent



GALLABRAE



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A History of the House of Douglas

from the earliest times down to the legislative union of England and Scotland
(published 1902)

By Sir Herbert Eustace Maxwell, Bt. 1845-1937

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A history of the house of Douglas from the earliest times down to the legislative union of England and Scotland

by Maxwell, Herbert Eustace, Sir, bart., 1845-1937



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And on to Chapter 9 ... *The Line of Morton*

CHAPTER IX

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THE origin of that branch of the house of Douglas now represented by the Earl of Morton, and the precise manner in which it diverged from the senior line, is a matter of conjecture and estimate of probability. Previously to 1198 Sir Archibald de Douglas [iii.] sold the lands of Hailes in Midlothian to the abbot and monastery of Dunfermline.¹ Somewhere between the years 1214 and 1226 he received a charter—*Archebaldo de Douglas filio Willelmi de Douglas*—from Malcolm, Earl of Fife, of the lands of Herdmanston and Livingston, also in Lothian, formerly held by William of Kilmaron,² to which charter Freskin [Friskyn], Dean of Moray, was one of the witnesses. This transaction received

¹ *Registrum de Dunfermelyn*, 190.

² *Morton*, i. p. xxxiii.

distinction upon his branch of the house. Godscroft, pardonably perplexed by the number of Douglasses named James and William,¹ pronounced him to be a natural son of the Good Sir James [vii.], whereby Tytler and other writers have been led astray. Even after this confusion has been cleared up there remains the embarrassing fact that Sir James of Lothian [xxvii.] left two sons called William, the elder a natural son, the younger legitimate and the subject of this notice. Even so well practised a genealogist as Mr. John Riddell overlooked this point, considering that the designation of "the younger," applied to William [xxviii.] in a charter of David II., was meant to distinguish him from his father, who, indeed, died before David came to the throne.² But it was no more than the popular way of distinguishing him from his bastard brother; which Bower makes perfectly clear in his account of the taking of Edinburgh Castle in 1341 *per dominos Willelmum et Willelmum de Douglas et Bullok*. He states that after the place was taken "the said William placed therein as constable his elder brother, a bastard [*nothus*], named William."³ Allusion also is made to this brother as *Willelmus de Douglas senior* in various documents of the reign of Edward III. He was taken prisoner at the battle of Durham, lodged successively in the Tower of London, Rockingham, and Nottingham Castles, and released from his chains on 16th May 1350, under the pledges of Sir Walter de Haliburton and Sir David de Annan that he would not go outside Nottingham Castle without the constable's leave.⁴ Finally, *Willelmus frater meus* is one of the witnesses to the will executed by the Knight of Liddesdale in 1351.⁵

¹ Ever since the Conquest John and William have been the commonest baptismal names in England. It is recorded that in 1173 Sir William de St. John and Sir William Fitz-Hamon gave a dinner party limited to knights bearing the name of William, and that the company numbered one hundred and twenty. In Scotland, William was very popular, but John became discredited because of John Baliol; so much so that John the Steward, when he came to the throne in 1390, assumed the name of Robert.

² *Stewartiana*, p. 137.

⁴ Bain, iii. 274, 277.

³ Bower, xiii. 47.

⁵ *Morton*, ii. 55.

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Born about the year 1300, William de Douglas was the legitimate son of Sir James of Lothian [xxvii.]. Of his mother nothing is known save that her name was Joan, and that when she became a widow she drew her terce from the lands of Blackness in Linlithgowshire.¹ He makes his first appearance in history as Warden of the Marches in 1330, to which office it may be assumed that he had been appointed on the departure of his kinsman the Good Sir James [vii.] for the Holy Land with the heart of King Robert. Complaints were laid before Edward III. against him and the Earl of Moray in that year by the *communale* of a northern county, probably Cumberland, for arbitrary conduct in regard to redress of offences, and for careless observance of the truce.² When war between England and Scotland was renewed by the landing of Edward Baliol and the disinherited lords in Fife in the autumn of 1332, Douglas vigorously resisted the usurper, albeit he is not mentioned as taking part in the Tineman's [x.] camisade at Annan, nor in his raid upon Gilsland in March 1333. But when Sir Antony de Lucy, on the 23rd of that month, made a counter-raid upon Annandale, Sir William de Douglas, with Sir Humfrey de Boys, Sir Humfrey de Jardine, William Baird—*malefactores solennes*³—attacked him with the garrison of Lochmaben.

Captured by
Sir Antony
de Lucy, 23rd
March 1333.

After de Boys, Jardine, and four-and-twenty of the Scots had been slain, Douglas and Baird yielded themselves prisoners. Lucy received three wounds, but only two Englishmen were killed.⁴ By King Edward's command Douglas and Baird were put in irons in Carlisle.⁵ Douglas was not ransomed until two years later, when he returned to Scotland and applied himself vigorously to the task of clearing the English and the adherents of Baliol out of Scotland.

He was present at the Parliament convened at Dairsie in April 1335 by the Guardians, Robert the Steward and the Earl of Moray, of which Parliament Fordun contemptu-

¹ Bain, iii. 341, 389.

² *Ibid.*, 187.

³ *Lanercost*, 272.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 273.

⁵ Bain, iii. 194.

ously observes that "nothing was done therein but what was ridiculous." This he attributes to the Earl of Athol's influence over the Steward, "who was at that time not governed by much wisdom"; but he pays the compliment to March, Moray, Sir Alexander de Mowbray, and Sir William de Douglas that they "behaved discreetly and quietly."¹ Athol certainly was working some mischief between the Guardians at this period, though nobody seems to know exactly how or why.² It was not a safe time for dissension, inasmuch as Edward of England and Edward Baliol were on the warpath, and the Scottish Guardians had issued orders for all movables and cattle to be carried and driven into the hills, lest they should serve for the support of the invaders. In July an English fleet of one hundred and eighty sail appeared in the Forth, and King Edward occupied Perth.³

Guy, Count of Namur, landing on the east coast with a body of Flemish troops to reinforce King Edward, was encountered on 1st August on the Borough Muir near Edinburgh by the Earls of Moray and March and Sir Alexander de Ramsay of Dalwalsey.⁴ A brisk combat ensued, in which Bower assigns a foremost place to *quædam virago Gellerena*—a certain virago of

¹ Fordun, ii. 350.

² The Deputy Chamberlain, Adam of Buthirgask, reports that owing to the dispute [*discordia*] between the Stewart and Moray he had been unable to collect the customs of any of the burghs north of the Forth, except part of those of Aberdeen, as the two Guardians had appointed each his own people to collect them.—*Exchequer Rolls*, i. 435.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Fordun, Bower, Wyntoun, and the Pluscarden chronicler all state that this expedition was commanded by the Count of Gueldres, who also was an ally of the English at this time. But King Edward's safe-conducts to the Count of Namur, describing him as coming [12th July 1335] with an armed force to the English King's assistance, and [11th August] as returning home, leave no doubt that the Scottish historians are mistaken, and that the authors of *Scalacronica* and the *Lanercost Chronicle* are right. Moreover, King Edward [3rd August] gave Namur's brother Philip a silver gilt enamelled cup and ewer, and a similar cup to his knight, for services against the Scots [Bain, iii. 211]; paid Namur's expenses home from Scotland, replaced two horses lost by the Count's esquires [*Ibid.*, 5th September], and granted safe-conducts [23rd July 1337] for knights taken in Edinburgh in the company of the Count of Namur [*Ibid.*, 226].

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Gueldres—who, fully armed and well mounted, did single combat with Sir Richard Shaw. These opponents charged each other with such force that the lance of each transfixed the other's body. Then, when their corpses were being prepared for burial, it was found that the doughty Flemish champion was a woman.¹

The battle was turning in favour of the Count of Namur when Sir William Douglas arrived in the nick of time with his own men and a force gathered in the Pentlands, and took the foreigners on the flank. They broke and fled for Edinburgh, hotly pursued by the Scots. The castle was in ruins at the time, having been dismantled lest it should fall into English hands, but the Flemings swarmed among the rocks, slaying their own horses and making a rampart of them, as Bower reports. They made good their defence till the morrow, when they surrendered. The Earl of Moray, *ultra modum curialis*—imprudently courteous—not only released his prisoners, but insisted upon escorting them over the Border.² He paid dearly for his clemency. After parting with the foreign knights on the march his escort was attacked by Percy. Moray himself was taken prisoner and entered upon a captivity of six years; Sir William Douglas, who rode with the Guardian, escaped with difficulty, and wounded in the ear, and William's brother James was slain.

All the north of Scotland was now in the power of Edward II. and his puppet, Edward Baliol, who had been crowned at Scone in 1332. Athol, who hated Moray and Douglas, had thrown up the cards and made terms with the English King, and persuaded one of the Guardians, Robert the Steward [afterwards to inherit the crown of the Bruce and found the Stuart dynasty], to do the same.³ The other Guardian, Moray, was in an English prison.

¹ Bower, xiii. 35.

² According to the custom of chivalrous warfare, Moray could only release those prisoners who had yielded themselves to him. Knights who took other prisoners than Moray's would be entitled to hold them to ransom; hence in 1337 there were still at least two Flemish knights in Scottish durance.

³ *Scalacronica*, 165.

Athol was rewarded by being appointed Baliol's lieutenant of the realm. Truly the national cause of Scotland had never been at so low an ebb since Robert the Bruce emerged from his hiding.

Well might the Abbot of Inchcolm bless the saints for the ambition which at this crisis impelled Edward III. to enter upon the Hundred Years War for the crown of France—

*“It wes to Scotland a gud chance
That thai made thaim to werray¹ in France:
For hade thai halply thaim tane
For to werray in Scotland allane,
Eftyr the gret myscheffis twa,
Duplyne and Halidowne war tha,
Thai suld have skaithit it to gretly.”²*

But there were still a few true-hearted Scots knights at liberty whom neither blandishment nor bribe nor menace could bring to bow the knee to Baliol—Sir Andrew Moray of Bothwell, to wit, who, having been ransomed about August 1334, had been elected Regent by the patriots; Patrick Dunbar, Earl of March; Sir Alexander Ramsay of Dalwalsey, and Sir William Douglas of Lothian. These faithful chevaliers collected a force of some eight hundred spears out of Lothian and the Merse to maintain withal the cause of their absent King. There are so many sorrowful and shameful episodes in Scottish history, one has to blush so often for the treachery and selfishness of men of honourable lineage and high rank, that it is good to dwell on the splendid stand made by this little band, but for whom the hard-won independence of Scotland must assuredly have gone by the board.

The Almighty, says the pious Bower, having determined to put an end to the malice of Athol, inspired him with the project of capturing Kildrummie, the last strength north of the Forth which still held for King David, except Lochleven, where Sir Alan de Vipont had gallantly stood and repelled a siege. Now Kildrummie

¹ To make war.

² Have injured it [Scotland].—Wyntoun, viii. 33.

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was in charge of Sir Andrew Moray's wife, of the house of Bruce, wherefore it was determined to proceed to her relief. It seemed a hopeless enterprise, seeing that Moray, March, and Douglas had such a weak following. Nevertheless they made all speed to intercept Athol; and, having been reinforced by three hundred men from Kildrummie, surprised his greatly superior force in the forest of Kilblain. The result was a great victory for the patriots: Athol himself was slain, and his army was dispersed with much slaughter. Upon hearing of the fate of Athol, Edward III. suddenly returned to Scotland, in order to relieve Lochindorb Castle, where Moray had laid siege to the Countess of Athol. Having effected the relief, the King of England laid waste Moray, burnt Aberdeen, and returned to his own country as swiftly as he had left it.

After this stroke of good fortune the patriot cause gained much strength throughout Scotland. A valuable accession thereto was that of William Bullock, formerly a priest or friar of obscure birth, whose talents had raised him to the post of chamberlain to Edward Baliol. Him Sir William Douglas bribed or frightened into surrendering the castle of Cupar, whereof Bullock was constable for Edward. Dunnottar, Kinclavin, Laurieston, Falkland, St. Andrews, Leuchars, Bothwell, and other places of strength followed in rapid succession, for Edward III.'s mind and energy were now directed upon the French War. The Countess of March—"Black Agnes of Dunbar," daughter of Bruce's nephew Randolph, Earl of Moray—bravely defied a besieging force under the Earl of Salisbury for several months, until she was relieved by the approach of Sir Alexander de Ramsay in June 1338. Sir Andrew Moray died, and was succeeded in the Regency by Robert the Steward, whose purpose it now suited to turn patriot once more. He laid siege to Perth, which was practically Baliol's capital, and despatched Douglas to Calais to purchase material. Douglas returned with French ships, which made captures among King Edward's victualling fleet in the

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Tay.¹ He was wounded in the operations before Perth, but witnessed the fall of that city on 17th August 1339.

After that Douglas devoted himself to the reconquest of Teviotdale, having his headquarters in the recesses of

Douglas reconquers Teviotdale, 1339-1342. Jedburgh Forest, whence he made repeated sallies upon the English garrisons. By the year 1342 he was master of all Teviotdale, except Roxburgh Castle, and King David's writs ran

once more in lands which had been long in the grip of King Edward. His gallant exploits in this long and desultory campaign earned for him the title of the Flower of Chivalry, along with the more substantial recognition conveyed in the office of Sheriff of Teviotdale, coupled, as it always was, with that of Constable of Roxburgh Castle, as yet but an honorary appointment.

These honours proved disastrous in the end to the fair fame of this renowned chevalier, marking the turning-point in his career; but there still remained some notable "juperdyis" to be undertaken by Douglas before he entered upon the downward course. Edinburgh, Roxburgh, Berwick, Jedburgh, and Lochmaben were still in the hands of the English at the beginning of 1341—

"Worthy Willame off Douglas
In till his hart all angry was
That Edynburchis Castelle swa
Dyde to the land anoy and wa,²
Standand in myddis off the land;
Swa lang was it in his fais³ hand.
He thowcht to cast a juperdy."⁴

Edinburgh Castle had been rebuilt and garrisoned by the English after the battle of Borough Muir, and Douglas listened willingly to a scheme for its recovery propounded to him by William Bullock, who had played traitor to the two Edwards in the surrender of Cupar Castle. This

¹ Douglas received payment in 1342 for his expenses at Calais.—*Exchequer Rolls*, i. 507.

² Injury and woe.

³ Foe's.

⁴ To hazard an exploit.—*Wyntoun*, viii. 38.

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scheme consisted of one of those complicated ruses, almost as dear as miracles to the mediæval chronicler.

A mariner named Wat Curry was hired to take his vessel to Inchkeith, with a party of picked men under command of Sir William Douglas and Fraser of Durris. He then presented himself as a merchant before the commandant of the castle,¹ and offered him supplies of excellent wine and corn, which he pretended to have for disposal. Some of the Edinburgh townfolk—William Fairley, William Bartholomew, and others—were in the plot.² A bargain having been struck between Curry and the English officer, wagons were soon on their way up the Castle Hill, freighted with casks filled, some with sand and others with salt water. The drawbridge was lowered for their admission; a cunning driver managed to jam his team under the portcullis so that it could not be let down; the blast of a horn rang out; Douglas rushed from concealment with a well-armed party, overpowered the gate-guard, and carried the castle by surprise.

The prowess of the Flower of Chivalry attracted the admiration of Sir Henry de Lancaster, Earl of Derby,³ who longed to measure lances in the lists with such a renowned chevalier. Edward III., having concluded a truce with France after the siege of Tournay [1340], had returned to England. This truce was framed to include the Scots; nevertheless the Earls of Sutherland and March had been raiding destructively in Northumberland, which brought Edward in haste to the Border. He entered Scotland in December 1341, passed through Ettrick Forest in very bad weather, and returned to Melrose.⁴ Derby obtained King Edward's

Capture of
Edinburgh
Castle, 16th
April 1341.

Douglas
encounters
the Earl of
Derby,
December
1341.

¹ Sir Thomas de Rokeby was the governor, but he was absent at the time, defending Stirling Castle, of which also he was governor. Froissart mentions Richard Limosin as the governor of Edinburgh, but this name does not occur in official documents.—Bain, iii. pp. xlix., 252.

² They afterwards received rewards for their services from King David.—*Exchequer Rolls*, i. 490, 507, 522.

³ Son and heir of Henry, Earl of Lancaster.

⁴ Leland's synopsis of *Scalacronica*. The corresponding folios in the

permission to challenge Douglas to single combat, which was willingly accepted by the Flower of Chivalry. The knights met in the King's presence, but the Scottish champion was wounded in the hand at the first encounter by the breaking of his own lance, and the stipulated number of tilts could not be fulfilled. Douglas seems not to have recovered in time to take his part in an international tournament which took its rise out of this affair, when twenty Scottish knights, headed by Sir Alexander Ramsay of Dalwalsey, ran three tilts at Berwick against as many English chevaliers. Fortune declared for the Scots, of whom only one, a Hay, was slain, which success perhaps strengthened Douglas's growing jealousy of Ramsay. The lamentable depth of infamy into which that passion plunged one of the doughtiest defenders of Scottish independence must now be told.

Ramsay's growing fame culminated in the spirited capture of Roxburgh Castle by a night escalade. This stronghold, whereof Douglas was the titular constable, had hitherto defied all the Flower of Chivalry's plans for its seizure, and he took it as a deadly affront that any other chevalier should succeed where he had failed. Sir Thomas Gray was scandalised at the impiety of Ramsay, whose exploit was carried out "at the very hour of the Resurrection," and points out that all they who devised the plot came to an evil end.¹

King David, returning from his exile in France on 1st June following, was delighted with Ramsay's exploit; but David was only just eighteen; he understood nothing of the internal affairs of Scotland, and he adopted a rash method of rewarding the gallant knight. Depriving Douglas of his offices of Sheriff of Teviotdale and Constable of Roxburgh,

original have been lost, but King Edward's presence at Melrose in December 1341, which Lord Hailes overlooked, is attested by two writs issued at Melrose on 20th and 27th of that month.—Bain, iii. pp. xlix., 250.

¹ Leland's synopsis; the original passage in *Scalacronica* having been written on the missing folio.

Sir Alexander Ramsay captures Roxburgh Castle, Easter, 1342.



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he conferred them upon Sir Alexander, to the great dismay of experienced men, who foresaw the coming trouble; "for few were the things that King David did with mature deliberation and the advice of wise men; but his acts were often headstrong, on his own judgment and without counsel, as afterwards became plain."¹

Douglas was incensed beyond measure on beholding his offices bestowed upon a hated rival, thereby implying that he had proved himself unworthy to hold them. His vengeance was as swift as it was horrible. Ramsay had summoned a Court to meet in the church of Hawick, and was quietly awaiting its assembly when *supervenit filius invidiæ*² — there arrived that brat of jealousy — William Douglas, with a strong following. Ramsay, suspecting no ill, inasmuch as he knew of no offence, rose and saluted Douglas, inviting him to a seat on the bench. But Douglas and his men flew like wolves upon Ramsay's unready company, overpowered them, wounded the Sheriff and bound him upon a mule. They carried him off to Douglas's castle of Hermitage, where this brave knight was literally starved to death. Fordun says he lingered for seventeen days without food; another story, quoted by Bower, runs that he prolonged his existence by means of some corn which dropped into his dungeon from a granary above. *O exterminabilis invidia Diaboli!* exclaims the pious Bower, and launches into fine moral reflections, winding up with an appropriate quotation from Seneca; but after all, what seems to have shocked the Abbot of Inchcolm most deeply in this affair was the sacrilege committed in Hawick church; while King David chiefly resented the crime because it was committed upon one of his officials. At all events, it was not long before the Flower of Chivalry was received back to royal favour, so completely that the offices of his victim were restored to the murderer by the King. Robert the Steward was the chief agent in this reconciliation;—"thus," observes Lord Hailes, "was the first Douglas who set himself above the

Slaughter of
Sir Alexander
Ramsay, 1342.

¹ *Pluscarden*, ii. 222.

² *Ibid.*

law pardoned through the generous intercession of the Steward."

It has been shown how closely Douglas had been associated with William Bullock, the renegade, in some of his most brilliant exploits. Bullock by this time was a knight and Chamberlain of Scotland, but, whether with good reason or without, certain persons managed to arouse the King's suspicions against him. David ordered Sir David Barclay to arrest and imprison him in the dreary castle of Lochindorb, where the luckless ex-priest died shortly afterwards of starvation, as was commonly reported. Douglas was on his good behaviour at the time, and was prudent enough to take no immediate action in revenge for his friend's fate. Not the less did he mark out the King's agent, Barclay, for future punishment, and from this time forward his loyalty to King David was of very dubious quality.

Impulsive young David did not do things by halves: having granted pardon to Douglas, he proceeded to load him with favours, bestowing upon him by separate charters the lands of Aberdour, the whole earldom of Athol, the lands in Ewesdale and Eskdale forfeited by Sir James Lovel, the lands forfeited by Sir John Mowbray, and the old Graham barony of Dalkeith resigned by Sir John de Graham.¹ As has been mentioned above,² the King had granted the lordship of Liddesdale to Robert the Steward; but Robert now resigned this on receiving from Douglas the earldom of Athol, whereupon the King bestowed Liddesdale upon Douglas,³ who was thenceforward known generally as the Knight of Liddesdale. No doubt he had a splendid record of services in driving out the English, and the easy-going King overlooked his crime against a patriot not less devoted and hardly less successful.

Much of the territory recovered by Sir William Douglas from the English was part of the ancient Douglas lands. The head of the house at this time was Hugh the

Fall of Sir
William
Bullock,
c. 1343.

Douglas
regains the
King's favour,
1342.

¹ *Morton*, ii. 44-48.

² P. 77, *ante*.

³ *Morton*, ii. 46, 47.

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Dull [ix.], a parish priest, wholly unfitted by training, habit, and inclination to enact the part of a great feudal proprietor. The Flower of Chivalry, therefore, had no scruples, and encountered no difficulty in persuading his chief to make over to him large tracts of country, including half the barony of Westerkirk, the barony of Stabilgorton, the lands of Polbothy [now Polmoodie], and other lands lying in the town and territory of Merton.¹

On 26th May 1342 Hugh the Dull, as mentioned in a former chapter, made formal renunciation of all his great possessions, for the purpose of entailing them upon William, afterwards 1st Earl of Douglas [xi.], and his heirs, whom failing, upon the Knight of Liddesdale and his heirs.²

There is the gravest cause for suspicion of the Knight's loyalty after all these honours and favours had been heaped upon him. A truce with England had been agreed upon in 1343, to last till 1346, but the Scots observed it very loosely, and King Edward sent Baliol to the Border to overawe them. It may be inferred that Douglas had treasonable dealings with him. Mr. Lang suggests that he was carrying on the intrigues for which Bullock had suffered, and that a raid which the Knight of Liddesdale led into England in 1343 was no more than a blind.³

When the truce came to an end in 1346 Douglas, says Bower, tried to persuade David to march to the Highlands for the purpose of restoring order, which had been violently disturbed by the murder of Ranald, Lord of the Isles, and seven others, by the Earl of Ross. If this allegation is true it may indicate Douglas's endeavour to fulfil a secret compact with the English King. But Edward III. was busy at the siege of Calais, wherein David perceived a fine opportunity for ravaging his dominions. He mustered an army of some thirty thousand, according to the Lanercost chronicler, who waxes almost inarticulate with rage at the

¹ *Morton*, ii. 89-92, 93.

² *Rotuli Scotiae*, i. 637, 640.

³ *Lang's Scotland*, i. 256.

Scots—"accursed sons of Belial," and their King—"possessed of the devil, another Ahab."¹ David first be-

leaguered the Tower of Liddel, which he took, and cut off the head of Edward's governor thereof, Sir Walter de Selby, who was accused of freebooting. Douglas renewed his advice that

the King should march to the Highlands instead of venturing into England, but he was given to understand that the army had been mustered for higher purpose than merely winning the knight's tower of Liddel. So forward went the Scots, burning and spoiling, through Cumberland into Tynedale, till they reached Hexham, where they abode three days. The good friar of Lanercost is carried so completely away by his feelings as to repeat a scandalous story of the Scottish King's proceedings there, whereof the details are, to say the least, highly indelicate.²

By this time Percy, Thomas de Rokeby, and the Archbishop of York—*providus pater*—had raised the country, and were moving in three columns to resist the invaders. St. Cuthbert stood in apparition before King David, as is attested by sundry chroniclers, and warned him to desist from his wicked enterprise; but the King of Scots paid as little heed to this spiritual visitant as he had done to the advice of the Flower of Chivalry. He continued his march and encamped in the park of Beaurepair, in the neighbourhood of Durham. On the morning of 17th October the Knight of Liddesdale, with a foraging party, came into contact with the columns of Rokeby and York, and narrowly escaped capture. Hard pressed by Sir Robert Ogle's men, he galloped into the Scottish camp—*satis calefactus*, warm enough—and warned King David that the enemy was upon him. David was incredulous. "There are no men left in England," he said, "but wretched monks, worthless priests, and swineherds. They dare not touch us: we are safe enough."

¹ *Lanercost*, 344.

² *Ibid.*, 346.

David II.
invades Eng-
land, October
1346.

NEVILLE'S CROSS

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If that was really his opinion, as reported by the friar of Lanercost, it was about to be violently altered. Percy's division, forming the right of the English army, drew near, with Umfraville Earl of Angus, Scrope, and Musgrave in subordinate commands. Next in echelon advanced the Archbishop of York, and the left was brought up by the division under Sir Thomas de Rokeby.

Battle of
Neville's
Cross, 17th
October 1346.

The Scottish line of battle was quickly formed. In the centre the King commanded in person, the Earl of Moray and the Knight of Liddesdale were on the left, the Earl of March and the Steward of Scotland on the right.¹ Percy's column was the first to engage, falling upon the Scottish left, covered by a cloud of archery. Sir John Graham begged for a hundred horse with which to scatter the enemy's archers, but, failing to get a single one, charged alone. His horse was shot under him, and he returned on foot.² Percy pressed on and threw Moray's troops into disorder. Moray was slain, last of the noble line of Randolph, and Douglas yielded himself prisoner.

All went ill with the Scots after this. John Coupland captured King David; the Earls of Fife, Sutherland, Wigtown, and Menteith were taken; among the slain were the Earl of Stratherne, the Constable, the Marshall, and the Chamberlain of Scotland, with Lindsays, Camerons, Frasers, and others of many notable houses. There is some doubt about the behaviour of the Scottish right wing under the Steward and March. They made good their retreat into Scotland, and perhaps there was some ground for King David's complaint that they did not support him in the action as they ought. But David never loved his heir-presumptive.

The young King of Scots paid dearly for his rashness by eleven years of captivity. Bower, throwing all the

¹ This formation is what appears most probable after comparing the discrepancies of various writers.

² Bower, xiv. 3.

blame upon him for having rejected Douglas's advice, draws the following moral—

“Kyngeis state gif you will lede,
Till ald mennis consall tak gude hede:
Roboam his kyngham lesit,¹
Yonge mennis consall for he chesit.”²

But it was the old story—*delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi*. If the fault was the King's, the penalty was paid by his people, and weighed them low for many long years to come, by reason of the ransoms that had to be wrung from them, both for King David and for his comrades in misfortune.

It has been shown that the action began on the Scottish left, where Moray fell dead and the Knight of Liddesdale was taken. Dare we assume that the Flower of Chivalry was altogether whole-hearted on this occasion? Where so many Scottish knights died in their harness, this Douglas might have found a fitting end. It had been better for his fame and name had he done so, in view of all that was to come.

His first thought in captivity seems to have been to avenge the fate of his old confederate William Bullock. Now Sir David Barclay had only been carrying out the King's command when he arrested Bullock and lodged him in the dungeon of Lochindorb, never to leave it alive; but it is also alleged that he had slain John Douglas, brother of the Knight of Liddesdale, at Forgie Wood. There was in this ample foundation for a blood feud; therefore, when Barclay was done to death at Aberdeen by a band of assassins under Sir John de St. Michael [? Carmichael], nobody seems to have doubted that his death had been procured by Douglas. Godscroft, at all events, accepts the charge against his hero, which he would scarcely have done had there been reasonable doubt about it, for Godscroft is a famous special pleader. He is at much pains to justify the deed. After a long explanation how Douglas was far too deeply indebted to Bullock to be

Douglas
is taken
prisoner.

Slaughter of
Sir David
Barclay, 1350.

¹ Lost.

² Chose.

A RENEGADE KNIGHT

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indifferent to his fate, and perfectly in his right in avenging the slaughter of his own brother, he describes Barclay's murder as—

“A just fact, but not justly done; the matter was good, the form ill, being beside and against all order. But who could wait for order in so disordered a country? . . . His duty to his friends defendeth the fact; the estate of the country excuseth the form. God looketh not upon such things.”

Worse was to follow, though about this Godscroft remains discreetly silent. A stain of blood-guilt more or less could not greatly affect the character of him who had caused the gallant Ramsay to perish of starvation; but never before had one of the Douglas name stooped to treason.

In 1351 the Knight of Liddesdale was employed by Edward III. upon a secret mission to some of the Scottish nobles concerning the release of King David; but the terms offered could not be accepted with honour or profit. The negotiations fell through, and Douglas returned into captivity.¹

Foiled by the loyalty of his countrymen in this attempt to regain his liberty, the Flower of Chivalry now betrayed the cause in which he had won his renown. By an indenture, executed in London on 17th July 1352, he bound himself as liegeman of the King of England, whom he was to serve henceforward with ten men-at-arms and ten “hobelars” [light horsemen] at his own cost, but not against the Scots, *except at his own pleasure*. He was not to give counsel or aid against the English, and he was to allow them free passage through his lands at all times. In short, his estates were to form a door ever open for the invasion of Scotland. Finally, he was to give his only daughter and his nearest male heir as hostages to England for two years. In return for all this he was to receive at once Hermitage, Liddesdale, Corehead,

¹ Lord Hailes states that it was William, Lord of Douglas, who was intrusted with this negotiation by King Edward, but the person is distinctly mentioned in the document as *Monsieur William Douglas*, the usual appellation of the Knight of Liddesdale.—*Federa*, v. 738.

Newton, and Granton-Polboothy, all in Annandale and Moffatdale.¹

It was a shameful compact, but there was still justice under heaven, and the Knight of Liddesdale was baulked of the price of his infamy. Upon returning from his captivity to enjoy the fruits of his treason he found another William Douglas [xi.], his cousin and godson, hammering the English out of the southern Scottish counties, a task wherein he had attained great measure of success. How these two Williams met in Ettrick Forest, and how the elder fell by the hand of the younger, has been described above.² His body was taken first to the chapel of Lindean near Selkirk, and then laid in Melrose Abbey. In the lordship of Liddesdale he was succeeded by his slayer.

There is no record of the Knight of Liddesdale's marriage, but he left a daughter Mary, who, according to agreement, went to England as hostage for her father. On 24th June 1357 King Edward granted licence "to his beloved vallet Peter Tempest, for his good service," to marry Maria, daughter of Sir William de Douglas, knight, "who was lately delivered by her father as a hostage in England;"³ but this licence, which was overlooked by Sir William Fraser, does not seem to have been put into effect, for in 1361 Mary of Douglas married Reginald, son and heir of Sir William More of Abercorn,⁴ who divorced her before 1365, probably on finding that her inheritance had been set aside by her father's will in favour of her cousins. In 1365 a Papal dispensation was obtained for Mary's marriage with Thomas, son and heir of Sir Robert Erskine.⁵ She died in giving birth to a child by her second husband, who claimed

Slaughter of
the Knight
of Liddesdale,
August 1353.

¹ Bain, iii. 286.

² P. 78, *ante*.

³ Bain, iii. 298.

⁴ On 30th June 1360 Sir William More paid £250, part of 650 merks to be paid for the marriage of Mary de Douglas; and on 30th November a further sum was paid for delivery of the lady's person.—Original receipts in Public Record Office, quoted by Sir W. Fraser, i. 253, note.

⁵ Theiner, p. 330.

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a liferent in the lands of Dalkeith, "according to the courtesy of Scotland, on the plea that the child had been born alive."¹ James Douglas of Lothian [xxix.], nephew and heir under the will of the deceased Knight of Liddesdale, opposed the claim; and it was arranged that the question should be settled in chivalrous fashion by a duel between the rival claimants, to take place in Edinburgh in presence of the King. The lists were prepared, Thomas Erskine was knighted by his father, James Douglas by Archibald the Grim [xiii.], when the King, yielding to remonstrance by friends of the parties, intervened and stopped the duel. Erskine consented to receive a sum of money in lieu of his claim, leaving James in undisputed possession of the barony of Dalkeith, etc.

The Knight of Liddesdale's will, above referred to, was singularly explicit, "as if," observed Mr. Cosmo Innes, "for the express benefit of genealogists."² Dated at Peebles, 3rd November 1351, it must have been executed while he was on the secret embassy from Edward III. It contains no reference to his daughter Mary, but the whole lands of Dalkeith, Newlands, and Kilbochok are devised to his five nephews in succession—James, Thomas, William, John, and Henry, sons of his brother John. Among the witnesses to this document are his natural brother Sir William, Sir Andrew Douglas, and Archibald the Grim [xiii.], designated *consanguineus meus*—"my kinsman."³

Of these sons of Sir John Douglas, nephews of the Knight of Liddesdale, Sir Henry [xxix.], the youngest, married Marjory, daughter of Sir John Stewart of Ralston, niece of Robert II.,⁴ and widow of Sir Alexander Lindsay of Glenesk, and became progenitor of the family of Douglas of Lochleven. Alan Stewart, Lord of Ochiltree, bestowed upon him the lands of Langnewton in Roxburghshire in 1377.⁵ In 1383

xxix. Sir
Henry Doug-
las of Lugton,
ob. 1393.

¹ Fraser, i. 254.

² Morton, i. p. xv.

³ *Ibid.*, ii. 53.

⁴ William of Douglas, Henry's son, has been erroneously stated in the peerages to have married this Marjory Lindsay, but see Sir Henry's will [*Morton*, ii. 176] and King David II.'s precept [*Ibid.*, i. p. xli.].

⁵ *Morton*, i. pp. xxxv.-xxxvii.

King Robert granted him £20 a year from the customs of Haddington,¹ and six years later he received from the King charters of the barony of Lugton in Midlothian,² and of the castle and lands of Lochleven in Kinross,³ whence his descendants received their style and title.

Sir Henry died before the end of 1393, being survived by his widow.⁴

¹ *Morton*, i. p. xxxvii.

² *Ibid.*, 168.

³ *Ibid.*, ii. 167.

⁴ *Ibid.*, i. p. xl.

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