



## **CALLENDAR HOUSE**

### **Information Leaflet** **The owners of Callendar House**

The Lands of Callendar were held by the Thaners of Callendar from around the time of David I (1124-1153) until 1346. The Thaners of Callendar had a residence close to the present site of Callendar House and this has been excavated in recent years.

In 1346 the lands of Callendar were granted by David II to Sir William Livingston and his spouse, Christian, daughter of Patrick the last Thane of Callendar. Patrick lost the lands by forfeiture, possibly because he was a supporter of the Balliol claim to the throne, but this is not verifiable.

Sir William Livingston played an important part in Scottish affairs. Amongst other things, he helped to negotiate the release of David II from English captivity following the Scottish defeat at the Battle of Neville's Cross in 1346. As one of the great noble families, the Livingston family remained prominent in Scottish history for the next four centuries.

In the fifteenth century the monarchy suffered from a series of long minorities, because most Stewart monarchs died young leaving a child as their heir. The nobility fought over control of the king's person during these minorities, and while the Stewart dynasty itself remained remarkably stable, the power of the noble families fluctuated with the age of the king and the various alliances made amongst the nobility. In 1439 James II was seized by his mother from Sir William Crichton and given to Sir Alexander Livingston who was then made Keeper of the King's person. Sir Alexander and his son, James, controlled the king during the 1440s and imprisoned the king's mother. On his majority in 1450, James II turned against the Livingstons and forfeited the lands of Callendar and their other estates, giving them to his wife, Mary of Gueldres. James Livingston then took part in a rebellion against James II which was swiftly put down, but by 1453 James Livingston was back in favour, the lands of Callendar were returned to him and he was created Lord Livingston of Callendar.

In the sixteenth century, Alexander, 5<sup>th</sup> Lord Livingston was one of the guardians of Mary, Queen of Scots, during her minority and he accompanied Mary to France when she fled the "rough wooing" by England as a small child. Alexander died in Paris in 1550 before Mary returned to Scotland. His son, William, 6<sup>th</sup> Lord Livingston, went into captivity with Mary in England but as a protestant he was released and allowed to return to Scotland in 1573. He died in 1592, five years after Mary had been executed.

In the seventeenth century, James 8<sup>th</sup> Lord Livingston, fought on the king's side during the civil wars. He was created 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Callendar by Charles I in 1641. After the defeat of the Scots army at the Battle of Preston in 1648 James went into exile and in 1651 Callendar House was besieged by Cromwell's army, led by General Monck. James returned to Callendar House following the Restoration in 1660.

In the eighteenth century, James, 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Callendar (and also 5<sup>th</sup> Earl of Linlithgow after inheriting the title on his uncle's death in 1695), took part in the Jacobite rising of 1715. He was part of the defeated army at the Battle of Sheriffmuir and he died in 1723. Following the 1715 rising, the government forfeited the estates of all the Jacobites who had taken part in the rebellion. The lands of Callendar were amongst these forfeited estates and in 1720, along with other estates, Callendar Estate was sold by the government to the York Buildings Company.

This was not the end of the Livingston involvement with Callendar Estate, however. In 1721 the York Buildings Company leased the estates to Alexander Glen and Alexander Hamilton in trust for the young Lady Anne Livingston, the heir of the 4<sup>th</sup> Earl. In 1724, Anne married the Earl of Kilmarnock and they continued to occupy Callendar House as one of their principal residences. In 1745 both the Earl of Kilmarnock and his son, Lord Boyd, took part in the Jacobite rebellion and Kilmarnock was beheaded in 1746. After Anne's death in 1747, their son, now Earl of Errol continued to use Callendar House until the York Building Company decided to sell the estate in the 1780s. The Earl of Errol bid for the estate at the sale in 1783, but he was outbid by William Forbes, who purchased the estate of Callendar and the estate of Almond.

From 1783 until 1963, Callendar House was owned by the Forbes family. Callendar Estate remains the property of the Forbes family today, although there have been significant changes in the property boundaries as parcels of land have been sold off and other land has been purchased over the centuries.

William Forbes who purchased Callendar Estate in 1783 was the owner of a flourishing and profitable coppersmith business in London. His family came from Aberdeen and the business was begun by his grandfather. His older brother, George, maintained the Aberdeen branch of the business while William set up the London branch which eventually became a separate business and was taken over by a younger brother, David, in the late 1790s. William was a typical example of a self-made man – an entrepreneur and businessman who aspired to social improvement and who purchased land in order to become part of the landed gentry. His son, William, became the MP for Stirlingshire, from 1835-38 and 1841-1855 and married the daughter of the Earl of Wemyss. Subsequent generations were prominent local landowners, and their occupations and roles were typical of their time and social position.

Callendar House and the immediate grounds surrounding the house were sold to Falkirk Town Council in 1963 as part of a compulsory purchase order. The land was acquired in order to build a number of high-rise flats. Callendar House was A-listed as a building of historical significance and over the years various schemes were put forward to use the building or demolish it. In the late 1980s it was finally agreed that Callendar House should become the headquarters of the local authority museums service and be renovated and opened to the public as a museum and visitor attraction. Callendar House now serves as the headquarters of Falkirk Council Cultural Services.