

Background

KING JAMES V

The key figure in the original palace project was the young King James V who gave instructions for it to be built in 1538.

Even though he was a young man in his twenties at the time, the unfortunate monarch was dead just four years later.

He came to the throne at just one year old (he was born on 10 April, 1512) after his father, James IV, was killed fighting the English at the battle of Flodden in 1513.

The defeat, on 9 September, was a disaster for Scotland because many of leading nobles were wiped out.

James V was crowned just weeks later at the old Chapel Royal at Stirling Castle on 21 September.

His mother Margaret married Archibald Douglas, sixth earl of Angus, in 1514.

The Duke of Albany, backed by French troops, was regent of the country for much of James' childhood.

In 1526 James, aged 14, tried to take personal control of the kingdom.

But Douglas, now estranged from Margaret, kidnapped the king and held him captive while trying to corrupt him and win his confidence.

After escaping in 1528 James finally managed to take up the reins of power – taking revenge on his former captors.

He became famed for disguising himself as a poor man and going out among his ordinary subjects.

The king also had a number of mistresses and fathered at least nine illegitimate children before his first marriage.

Aiming to reinforce the Auld Alliance he wed Madeleine of France.

But the sickly bride died in 1537, probably of tuberculosis, just weeks after arriving in Scotland.

The following year he married again, this time to the widow Mary de Guise, another high born French noblewoman.

Mary bore him two sons but both died in infancy.

However, James was a young, vigorous king and the future seemed hopeful.

But conflict flared with England and the Scots were defeated at Solway Moss on 24, November 1542.

Shortly afterwards the king, who had not been at the battle, took to his bed ill.

News arrived that Mary de Guise had given birth, but to a daughter not a son.

James died six days later on 14, December, believing that the Stewart dynasty had come to an end.