

Heroes to some, villains to others – the Grahams were rarely far from controversy. Known as the Gallant Grahams, they were often in the thick of Scotland’s turbulent politics and violent conflicts. Throughout the centuries they have been influential in helping to shape the nation.

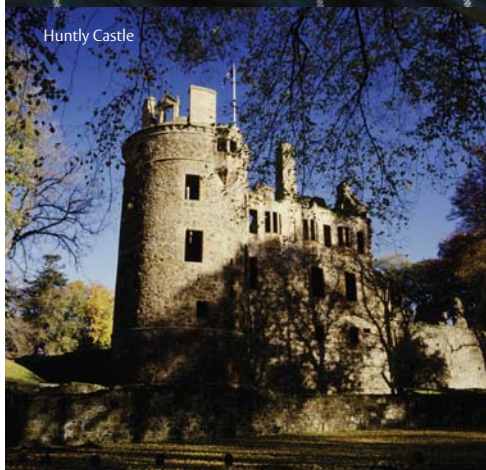


THE NAME GRAHAM

PROBABLY COMES FROM FRANCE
HENCE ‘DE GRAHAM’
MEANING FROM A PLACE CALLED GRAHAM

Graham Clan tartan

Huntly Castle



Corgarff Castle



THE MURDERER, THE MARQUIS AND THE DEMOCRAT

Murdering your king rarely reaps rewards – and Sir Robert Graham was tortured and executed for killing James I in 1437.

His actions were far removed from those of Sir John Graham of Dundaff, the royal standard bearer, who was killed at the Battle of Falkirk in 1298.

In the 1640’s, James Graham, Marquis of Montrose, risked all in a spectacular uprising aimed at returning the deposed Charles I to the throne.

It was a bloody conflict involving many castles across Scotland, leaving many battered and broken.

In 1644 Huntly Castle was held briefly by Montrose but in 1647 the royalist garrison was starved into submission – the ordinary soldiers were hanged from the walls and their officers beheaded.

Corgarff Castle was chosen as a muster point in 1645 where the marquis gathered forces for his campaign.

That same year he devastated the lands round Dollar Glen and tried, but failed, to take Castle Campbell, a stronghold of his enemy the Earl of Argyll.

At Inverlochy he succeeded in defeating a Campbell force – his victory was followed by the massacre of 1,300 of the defenders.

Regarded by some as a great Scottish hero and by others as brutal egotist who compared himself to Biblical figures, Montrose’s rising was ultimately defeated and the Marquis fled to Norway.

Montrose returned in 1650 to raise the standard of Charles II.

His force of 1,200 men was swiftly defeated by 200 Covenanter cavalry. Montrose was captured a little later and taken to Edinburgh to be hanged.

Another member of the clan whose political actions have had tremendous political consequences for Scotland was Robert Bontine Cunningham-Graham who was born in 1852.

In this case his influence was gained through force of argument rather than of arms.

He earned lasting fame as founding president of the Scottish Labour Party and was later president of the new Scottish National Party.

The Gartmore (formerly Castlehill) Monument now stands as memorial to his life.

BONNIE DUNDEE OR BLUIDY CLAVERS?

The dashing John Graham, 1st Viscount of Dundee, was one of several controversial members of the clan.

As a military officer he helped put down the Presbyterian Covenanters some of whom took up arms in the face of religious persecution.

During what became known as the Killing Time he earned the nickname Bluidy Clavers for summarily executing his Covenanter enemies and terrorising women and children.

His only defeat was at Drumclog where his cavalry faced a poorly armed band of Covenanters led by the 19-year-old poet William Cleland.

When James VII and II lost his throne John Graham was among those who campaigned to restore him.

In 1689 Dundee gathered a small army which enjoyed initial military success – Corgarff Castle was burned to stop it falling into his hands.

Dundee based himself at Blair Castle ahead of the fateful Battle of Killiecrankie.

After a day of skirmishing his Highlanders made a massed charge. Dundee – clad in supposedly bulletproof jacket – led one contingent.

The battle was a total success, the jacket was not, and Dundee was mortally wounded.

As he died he asked how the battle was going. The soldier attending him said: 'Well for the king, but I am sorry for your lordship'.

Dundee's last words were reported to be: 'It is the less matter for me seeing that the day goes well for my master.'

He became a Jacobite hero, remembered as Bonnie Dundee – his jacket can be seen at Glamis Castle.

St Andrews Castle

Blair Castle



DISCREDITED, BURDENED WITH DEBT AND SUFFERING A MENTAL BREAKDOWN

THE HERETIC ARCHBISHOP

Heretic, schismatic and blasphemer – unusual claims to make about an archbishop.

But these were the findings of an inquiry ordered by the Pope into Patrick Graham, the first Archbishop of St Andrews.

Stranger still as it was Pope Sixtus IV himself who had created the position and granted it to Graham in 1472.

Patrick was a high flier but stirred up great jealousies when he became Bishop of St Andrews aged just 30.

In 1471 he was in Rome to explain why James III was trying to increase his influence but took the opportunity to advance his own career.

The creation of an archbishopric did not go down well in Scotland as its top churchmen had previously been able to take up issues directly with the papacy.

A major coalition was formed against the archbishop leaving him discredited, burdened with debt, and suffering a mental breakdown.

Having lost all influence the Pope turned against him.

Graham was excommunicated, deprived of his archbishopric and sentenced to be detained for life.

A broken man, he was held at St Andrews Castle and at the abbeys of Arbroath, Inchcolm and Dunfermline.

He eventually died at Lochleven Castle in 1478 and was buried at St Serf's Inch nearby.

GRAHAM SITES

- 1 Arbroath Abbey:**
Patrick Graham, the first Archbishop in Scotland (1472-78), was abbot here.
- 2 Blair Castle:**
John Graham of Claverhouse was brought to the castle after his death at nearby Battle of Killiecrankie in 1689.
- 3 Castle Campbell:**
James Graham, 1st Marquis of Montrose, tried to take the castle from the Covenanters and the Earl of Argyll in 1645.
- 4 Claypotts Castle:**
Belonged to John Graham of Claverhouse, who didn't live there but at Dudhope Castle, in Dundee.
- 5 Corgarff Castle:**
James Graham, Marquis of Montrose, used the castle as a mustering point in 1645. It was burnt in 1689 to prevent its use by Jacobites led by John Graham of Claverhouse.
- 6 Glamis Castle:**
The boots and supposedly bullet-proof leather jacket of John Graham of Claverhouse are on display.
- 7 Glenfinnan Monument:**
A tower, designed by the noted Scots architect James Gillespie Graham, surmounted by a Highland warrior, commemorates the raising of the royal standard by Prince Charles Edward Stuart in 1745.
- 8 Huntly Castle:**
James Graham, Marquis of Montrose, briefly held the castle against the Covenanters and the earl of Argyll in 1644.
- 9 Inverlochy Castle:**
The 1st Marquis of Montrose won the nearby battle of Inverlochy in 1645.
- 10 Killiecrankie:**
In 1689, 'Bonnie Dundee', John Graham of Claverhouse, led the Jacobites to victory at the Battle of Killiecrankie.
- 11 St Andrews Castle:**
Archbishop Patrick Graham was imprisoned in the castle over a struggle for the primacy of Scotland.



Key to sites

- Historic Scotland
- National Trust Scotland
- Historic Houses Association

Killiecrankie



Castle Campbell



Glamis Castle

