

Clan Ruthven

Story from web site: <http://www.electricscotland.com/webclans/ntor/ruthven2.html>



The Ruthvens are said to be of Norse origin taking their name from the lands of Ruthven, Rannoch in Perthshire. The Ruthvens increased their strength by an early marriage to a Cameron heiress and in 1487, Sir William of Ruthven was created a peer. Patrick, 3rd Lord Ruthven took a leading part in the murder of David Rizzio, Mary Queen of Scots Italian secretary at Holyrood Palace in 1566 at the instigation of Lord Darnley the Queen's husband. Darnley was let off the charge of murder so Ruthven was forced to flee to England where he died soon afterwards. However despite the obvious threat a Ruthven bore, the 4th Lord,

William found favor with the young King James VI and was created Earl of Gowrie in 1581. The next year though he was with the Presbyterian earls in the Raid of Ruthven when the 16 year old King James VI was seized and held prisoner in Ruthven Castle Perth for nearly a year. This incident was said to be in defense of the religion of the kingdom but in reality it was to get rid of the King's favorites, the Duke of Lennox and Stewart and the Earl of Atholl. The King pardoned the Earl of Gowrie for his part but on Arran's ascendancy to the King's favor they were again declared traitors. Already Gowrie was in correspondence with his accomplices Mar and Glamis. They planned to capture the King and Stirling Castle; however, he was captured and beheaded before the plan was enacted. John the 3rd Earl was killed with his brother in the "Gowrie Conspiracy". The true explanation of this incident has never been uncovered but the official version is that the Earl and his brother were attempting to kill the King and in the alleged rescue of the King from their clutches both men were killed. It has always been suspected that this was a royal plot to be rid of these undesirable subjects. However following the conspiracy the peerage was extinguished and the name and arms of Ruthven were abolished. Only in 1641 was an Act passed making it lawful for the Ruthvens of Balindean to assume the name again. A third brother had escaped and assumed the title of Lord Ruthven as did his heir but in the 17th century the line failed. The Ruthvens of Freeland became the senior representatives becoming Lord Ruthvens of Freeland. Sir Alexander Ruthven was created Lord Gowrie of Canberra on his appointment as Governor-General of Australia and in 1945 he was made Earl of Gowrie thus reviving the ancient title of his ancestors.

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RUTHVEN: Much of the early pedigree of this family is evidenced by entries in the Chartulary of the Abbey of Scone where their progenitor is shown to be Swan, son of Thor, a Viking baron who held lands in the Lothians. In the reign of William the Lion (1165-1214) Swan held the lands of Ruthven, Perthshire from where the family take their name, and Crawford in Lanarkshire which he held as superior over the Lindsays. By the time William Ruthven of that Ilk was created Lord Ruthven in 1488 the family had amassed considerable wealth and power. The 2nd Lord married the heiress of Haliburton of Dirleton, East Lothian, who brought these lands to the family, His son, Partick, 3rd Lord, accompanied by his heir William, held a sword at the pregnant abdomen of Mary Queen of Scots while the murder of David Riccio, her Italian secretary, was perpetrated at Holyrood in March 1566. William, 4th Lord Ruthven, Treasurer in 1571, was created Earl of Gowrie by James VI ten years later and he halted the ascendancy of Darnley's brother, Esme Stewart, Duke of Lennox in the 'Ruthven Raid' at which time, having invited the young James VI to Ruthven, 'imprisoned' him for 10 months. The king's life was again put in jeopardy by the Ruthvens when, in 1600, having been enticed to Gowrie House in Perth by the Master of Ruthven, an attempt was made on his life. Like his father, John, who became 3rd Earl in 1588, lost his life in consequence. The family's lands were forfeit and the name of Ruthven was banned from use by Parliament. The name was restored to the Ruthvens of Ballindean (Perthshire) by Act of Parliament in 1641 but the House of Ruthven, now named Huntingtower, passed to other hands. The fortunes of the principal line waned but the name of Ruthven gained esteem in the service of Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden when Partick Ruthven was knighted by that king. He returned to Scotland in 1638 to join Charles I who created him Lord Ruthven of Ettrick and in 1640 he held Edinburgh Castle for the King and was created Earl of Forth in 1642 (extinct on his death). Many have since been honored for services, and following Governor Generalship of Australia, a descendant in the Freeland line obtained a new creation of the Earldom of Gowrie.

The Ruthven Raid 1582

<http://www.scotclans.com/clans/1582.htm>

In 1581, Esme Stewart was created Earl of Lennox.

He was in support of Queen Mary and acknowledged Catholic concerns at a time when the Reformation was well established in Scotland. The Presbyterians believed Lennox to be an agent for the Counter-Reformation and a Catholic spy.

Although both the King and Lennox had declared themselves for the Reformation, rulings made and appointments given by James, particularly those overturning General Assembly proceedings, had the Presbyterians convinced he was being influenced by Lennox.

William Ruthven, 1st Earl of Gowrie, was the head of Scotland's militant Presbyterians. Such was their fear of Lennox being near the King they staged a coup.

While the King was hunting in Atholl in August 1582, he was abducted by Gowrie and imprisoned in his House of Ruthven until, the next morning, he signed a document proclaiming himself to be quite free and that Lennox was to be banished from Scotland.

Gowrie led a new government which gave the Presbyterians ruling powers, all the while keeping James their captive. Lennox, who had moved back to France, died in 1583. Then in June that year the young King escaped from his imprisonment. Gowrie was charged with treason and had his head cut off.

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Ruthven

Scottish noble family, believed to trace its ancestry to Thor, a Saxon or Dane, who settled in Scotland in the reign of David I. The name is derived from lands in Perthshire held by the family. Patrick Ruthven, 3rd Lord of Ruthven, 1520?-1566, was a firm supporter of Protestant doctrines. A privy councillor to Mary Queen of Scots, he took a leading part in the murder (1566) of David Rizzio and wrote a memoir of the affair, which still exists in manuscript in the British Museum. He fled to England, where he died shortly after. Associated with him in the murder was his son, William Ruthven, 4th Lord of Ruthven and 1st Earl of Gowrie, 1541 – 1584. He also fled to England and remained there until pardoned (1567). He was head of the group of nobles who planned and carried out in 1582 what came to known as the Raid of Ruthven, in which they seized the young King James VI (later James I of England) and brought about the dismissal of Esme again. He was tried for high treason and beheaded. Two of his sons, John Ruthven, 6th Lord of Ruthven and 3rd Earl of Gowrie, 1578-1600, and Alexander Ruthven, 1580-1600, were involved in the mysterious Gowrie conspiracy of 1600. The two brothers were murdered at their estates in Perth by the retinue of James VI, with the king in attendance. None of the various explanations offered after the murders were widely believed, though the likeliest explanation is that the events evolved out of an unsuccessful attempt by the Ruthvens to seize the king. James VI later annexed their estates to the crown. Descended in collateral line was Patrick Ruthven, 1573-1651, who won distinction in the service of Gustavus II of Sweden. Later he supported the cause of Charles I in Scotland and England, eventually serving as general in chief of the royalist forces (1643 – 44).