

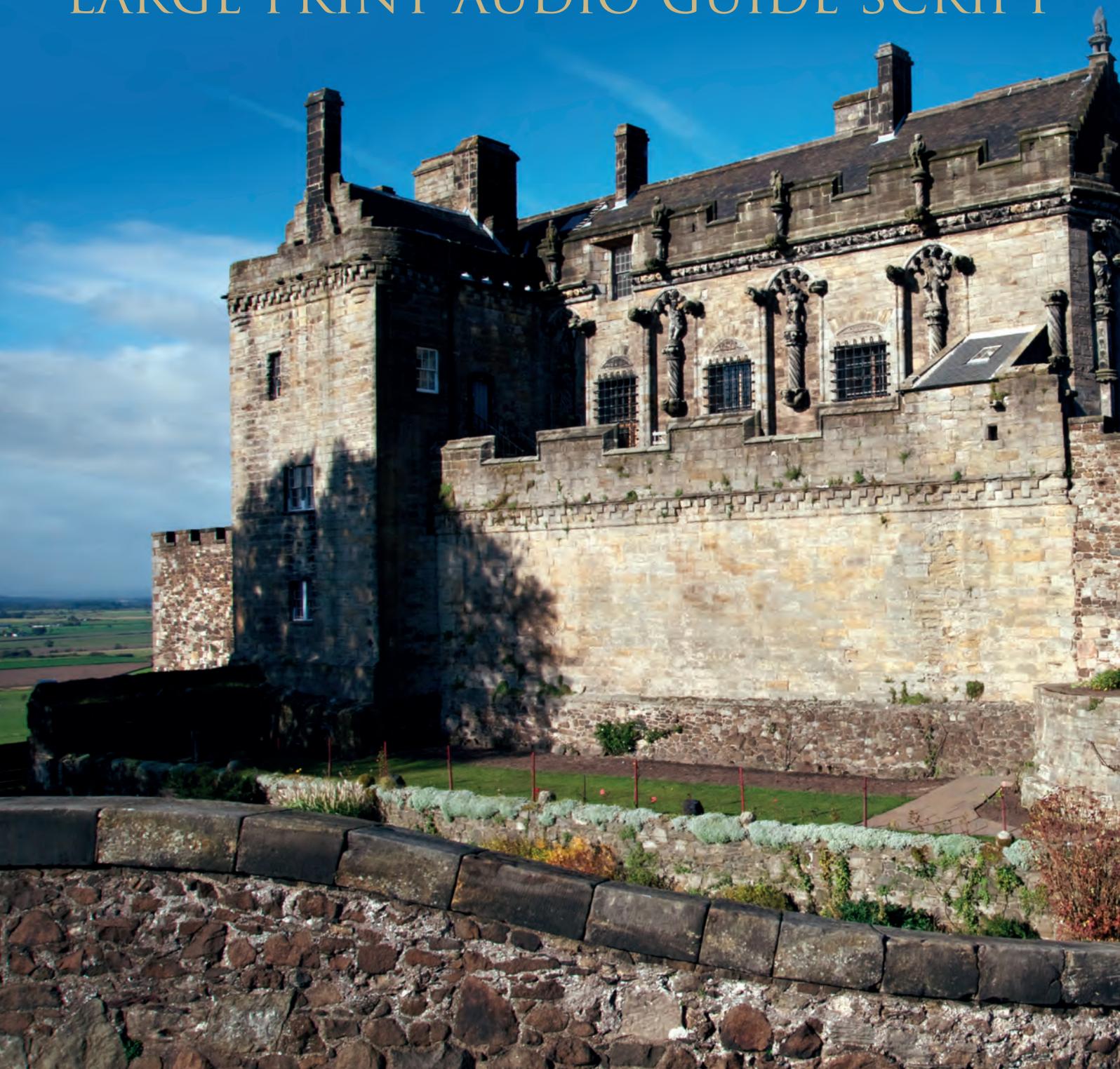


STIRLING  
CASTLE

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# STIRLING CASTLE

LARGE PRINT AUDIO GUIDE SCRIPT



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## **STOP 100. WELCOME (COUNTERGUARD)**

### **Female Narrator:**

Welcome to Stirling Castle; royal stronghold, palace of courtly pleasures and military fort.

Before we begin, you might like to adjust the volume. Use the buttons with the loudspeaker symbols, just beneath the screen. You can pause, at any time, by pressing the red button, then press the green button to resume.

For more detailed instructions, key in number ninety-nine. Or to begin your tour, simply press the green button.

(XX 1 – Counterguard)

## **STOP 99. INSTRUCTIONS**

### **Female Narrator:**

During the first part of the tour, I'll tell you where to go next. All you need to do is press the green button and the commentary will start automatically.

Later on, you'll need to keep an eye out for the numbers on the signs and panorama boards around the castle. To access the commentary, just key the number into your player. These numbers are dotted all around the castle, so if you get lost, or decide to slip away from the tour, just key in one of the numbers to join it again.

You can pause, at any time, by pressing the red button; press the green button to resume. To rewind, or fast-forward, use the buttons with the double arrow symbols. You can adjust the volume using the buttons with the loudspeaker symbols.

Should you have any questions, Historic Scotland staff will be happy to help. Please remember to return your audio guide when you've finished.

To hear these instructions again, key in ninety-nine, or to continue

your tour, press the green button.

(XX 1 – Counterguard)

## **STOP 1. COUNTERGUARD**

*Music*

### **Male Narrator:**

Stirling is one of Scotland's greatest castles, with over one thousand years of history. The backdrop for heroic battles waged by William Wallace, Robert the Bruce, and Bonnie Prince Charlie, it was favoured by many of Scotland's kings and queens, including Mary Queen of Scots – crowned here at Stirling – and King James the Fifth, who built a stately palace within the castle walls.

*Music ends*

Standing here, between the outer walls and the gatehouse you are offered a choice: Embark on a journey through time, into the castle itself, or visit the Castle Exhibition. As you face the castle, the exhibition is to your left, through the low archway, into the garden beyond. It will give you an overview of the castle's history and tell you about some of the skeletons found here at Stirling.

If you decide to visit the exhibition, I suggest you pause your tour now by pressing the red button.

To continue your tour into the castle, press the green button.

(XX 2 – Forework Gatehouse)

## **STOP 2. FOREWORK GATEHOUSE**

### **Female Narrator:**

Looking towards the castle, the twin-towered gatehouse ahead has three entrances; a large one in the centre, big enough to get carts through, and two smaller ones, for pedestrians. But if you were approaching the castle five hundred years ago, you'd have seen a very different sight.

Built by King James the Fourth in around fifteen hundred, this Forework Gatehouse was originally five storeys tall and was flanked with four towers, each capped with crenellated wall-walks and conical roofs.

Today, the stonework is exposed, but in King James day it was covered in a pale, honey-coloured coating of lime plaster. We call it 'king's gold'. Over the main entrance, just above that thin, projecting ledge, was a stone bearing the royal coat of arms; the standing lion, or 'lion rampant', picked out in bright red and yellow. Below it, was the royal motto; 'nemo me inpune lacessit', Latin for 'no one attacks me and gets away with it'!

It was an awe-inspiring sight that immediately proclaimed King James the Fourth's power and majesty. But he had another reason for making it special. He was preparing for marriage, and his bride-to-be was none other than Margaret Tudor, the daughter of the king of England. This was a golden age for Scotland and its royal dynasty, the Stewarts. Their court here at Stirling was as splendid as any in Europe. We'll see more of their wonderful buildings inside.

When you're ready, pass through the gatehouse and press the green button.

(XX 3 – Outer Close)

## **STOP 3. OUTER CLOSE**

### **Male Narrator:**

This is the 'Outer Close'. The word 'close' is Scots for 'courtyard', and this was one of two large courtyards that formed the medieval castle.

Directly in front of you is the pale, honey-coloured Great Hall, restored using the wonderful 'king's gold' lime plaster we just heard about. To the right, where you now see the grassy bank with the row of guns, there was a large building housing the kitchens and staff accommodation. To the far right is the low circular wall of the main well; all that serves to remind us that this courtyard was once the service area of a great, royal castle.

Over to the left is the imposing Royal Palace, built by King James the Fifth. It has been re-presented to reveal how the interior might have looked in its heyday in the fifteen-forties. Once inside, this audio guide will help to make your journey back through time complete.

We suggest you continue your tour there. But if you prefer, you can choose your own route. Just look out for the signs and panorama

boards dotted around the castle. Some of them have numbers, and if you key those numbers into your player, the commentary will start automatically. If you're visiting with children, you may like to see the palace vaults first; look for the tunnel to your left, next to the stone stairs.

To visit the Royal Palace, head towards the wooden staircase in front of the Great Hall. But don't go up. Instead, go through the archway to the left and walk up the cobbled path into the courtyard beyond. When you get there, press the green button.

(XX 4 – Inner Close)

## **STOP 4. INNER CLOSE**

### **Female Narrator:**

This is the castle's inner close, and the start of a particular journey that explores life at Stirling during one of its greatest periods.

The prince, James Stewart, was born in April, fifteen-twelve, and at only seventeen months old was crowned King James the fifth, here at Stirling. During his lifetime the castle would be transformed by a magnificent new palace, but his early death would throw Scotland's future into turmoil.

Our Guide through this story will be Sir David Lyndsay. When King James was a boy Lyndsay served him as a tutor and custodian. In later years the King appointed Lyndsay as his chief royal herald. His duties encompassed diplomatic missions abroad and organising royal events. In today's world we might think of him as a high-ranking civil servant. Lyndsay was also a man of letters who wrote many fine poems and plays.

Now cross the courtyard to the Royal Chapel with its six pairs of arched windows, and press the green button.

(XX 5 – Chapel Royal Exterior)

## **STOP 5. CHAPEL ROYAL EXTERIOR**

### **Female Narrator:**

This is where the King prayed, in a public display of his private devotion. Wherever the King went the altar and vestments travelled with him, the chapel being an institution rather than a place. Stirling had a succession of buildings that served as the Royal Chapel, this is the last.

James the Fifth was crowned in this location but in an earlier chapel.

Please enter, and when you're ready press the green button. David Lyndsay, an usher at the coronation, will describe the historic day.

(XX 6 – Chapel Royal Interior)

## **STOP 6. CHAPEL ROYAL INTERIOR**

### **Lyndsay:**

My memory of the coronation day is clear. Even though it was nearly forty years ago. I've grey hair now, but then I could hardly grow a beard. I was lucky to be there at all: a country Laird amongst some of the mightiest men of Scotland.

### *Music*

I can still picture it: All heads turn and bow as the royal procession enters. First the Earls of royal descent, bearing the sword and sceptre of state, then the crown bearer, and finally the Queen mother, holding the tiny hand of our future king, a wee boy, barely old enough to walk.

He looks about him with big dark eyes. The noise and dazzle would surely fright any other bairn, but this child is born to it. Once seated his little feet dangling o'er the edge. The crown is raised above his golden locks, and then, the climax of the ceremony;

### *A musical swell*

the bishops anoint the boy with holy oil. The child is proclaimed King James the fifth of Scotland.

*SFX: Chorus of voices: Long live the King (Voices treated to simulate the acoustics of the chapel)*

Those simple words are heart felt, for we are a people deep in grief. See the faces around you, worn with care, some of the men stiff with wounds, some of the women, red-eyed widows. This is a “mourning coronation”. The boy’s father is dead, King James the fourth, was killed twelve days ago on the battlefield of Flodden, leading a massive army against England. This defeat is the hardest we have ever known.

This boy is precious to me. The late king placed him in my personal care

Look upon this scene and remember the loyalty here sworn, for it will not last. This poor boy, who cannot comprehend his loss or his gain, will become the centre of a new struggle as others seek to control his throne.

*Music fades out*

**Female Narrator:**

Over the next fifteen years power ebbed and flowed within a small elite.

By his mid-teens King James was effectively held captive by the Earl of Angus at Holyrood palace in Edinburgh.

**Lyndsay:**

It was shameful. Angus kept the lad busy in idle pursuits: gambling, drinking, whoring. Sinful it was, and no schooling for a King.

But at sixteen King James assumed his full power. Earl Angus and his kin fled to London. The King left Edinburgh too. He had no love for the place of his confinement, and came here to Stirling, to the free heights of this great rock.

**Female Narrator:**

To learn more about this existing chapel key in 600.

Or to continue your tour, press the green button.

As you leave, look down, and you will see the wall-line of the earlier chapel in which James was crowned marked in the cobblestones outside.

(XX 7 – Inner Close Revisited)

## **STOP 600. CHAPEL ROYAL**

### **Female Narrator:**

This magnificent Chapel Royal was built by King James the Sixth in fifteen-ninety-four. It was completed in less than seven months, in time for the baptism of his first child, Prince Henry.

There's little now to hint at its original appearance, but the entrance door, flanked by six pairs of windows provides an important clue. For directly opposite, was a pulpit. At the time, Scotland had just become protestant. Now the Word of God, preached by a minister from his pulpit, was more important than the Mass, celebrated by a priest at the altar.

This chapel was the last building at Stirling to be built by Scottish royalty. Less than ten years after little Henry's baptism, James the Sixth travelled to London to be crowned James the First of England. And that was effectively the last that Scotland saw of its rulers.

But they did return. And the elaborate, painted frieze that runs around the walls is testament: At regular intervals, there's a repeated, rectangular motif.

Inside, is a crown, with a sword and scepter crossed below it;  
Scotland's crown jewels.

And there are initials: C R. These stand for Carolus Rex, and refer to King Charles the First, James' second son. The frieze was painted in preparation for his coronation visit in sixteen-thirty-three.

The artist who painted the frieze, Valentine Jenkin, clearly found the chapel too dull for his liking. If you look at the end wall, high up towards the ceiling, you'll see that he has painted a false window!

To rejoin the palace tour, go outside and press the green button.

(XX 7 – Inner Close Revisited)

## **STOP 7. INNER CLOSE REVISITED**

### **Female Narrator:**

Now back in the Inner Close let's look around us. Find a place to stand with the chapel behind you. (Pause)

To your right is "The King's Old Building" and to your left the "Great Hall" both built in the reign of James the Fourth. The hall represents the pinnacle of medieval design.

The building facing the chapel is the palace of James the Fifth, the boy we have just seen crowned. It represents a new style of royal architecture.

The imagery on the building was designed not only to impress important visitors but also to tell them a story.

Look at the statue on the left corner of the facing wall. It is the king himself, depicted with a long beard, perhaps symbolic of the wisdom of an Old Testament prophet. You can also see the goddess Venus with globe and spear in hand, and the bearded god Saturn wearing a loincloth. They communicate the idea that King James's reign was to be a time of peace and prosperity, like the mythical "golden age" of the classical world.

Securing peace was a vital priority for the young King. As a small nation Scotland always had need of strong allies. A generation earlier James's father allied with England by marrying Margaret Tudor, daughter of the English King. But that alliance had collapsed, so in 1536 James travelled to France to re-establish old French ties by marrying Madeleine de Valois, daughter of the French King.

*SFX: Gentle fade up: We hear the courtyard thronging with voices and activity*

**Lyndsay:**

In the years before his first marriage life at Stirling was changing. The whole castle buzzed with activity. The household and court numbered three hundred souls. We Scots were joined by musicians from Italy, embroiderers from Flanders and later, masons from France.

The King himself was full of energy, and I also flourished, becoming in time the most senior royal herald. I arranged the great ceremonies of state and travelled abroad as an ambassador for the crown.

As court poet I wrote satires to entertain and eulogies to welcome.

*SFX: Courtyard noises fade down.*

Alas with Queen Madeleine I hardly had the chance. The poor soul had never been strong. Within seven weeks of reaching Scotland she was dead.

What a blow that was. Scotland needed an heir and it was the King's duty to provide one. Again we turned to France. Our new Queen, Marie de Guise came from the ancient and powerful house of Guise – Lorraine. By the age of 21 she was already a mother and a widow, although duty required her son remain in France. We knew her as Mary of Guise, and a wiser or nobler woman I never met.

**Female Narrator:**

Turn left towards the Great Hall and enter through the open doorway. Move on into the main space and press the green button.

(XX 8 – Great Hall)

## **STOP 8. GREAT HALL**

*SFX: The sounds of footsteps some way off, of wooden benches being moved, and heavy earthenware crockery being stacked. The impression is of a small handful of staff tidying and clearing.*

### **Female Narrator:**

This Great Hall is the largest of its kind in Scotland. The space behind the wooden screen you have just passed through, was a servery for an army of kitchen staff. Above this is the minstrels' gallery. Music was for special occasions. Routinely, the humbler servants from the cellars, kitchens, laundry and stables ate here, much like a modern canteen.

*SFX: Sounds of activity fade out*

### **Lyndsay:**

Sometimes when about my work I find I have the hall almost to myself. Even then I am awed by it; the scale of this great roof, like an upturned ship.

As chief herald I arrange the main festivities of the year. Then you see this hall at its finest,

*SFX: A growing hubbub of voices fades in along with a fanfare of trumpets. Once these have sounded we hear the minstrels in the gallery.*

all hung about with tapestries, pennants and banners, what a mass of colour. And in winter these great fire places blazing, a haven of warmth in a frozen landscape. Let's get our back to one of them eh!

*SFX: Fade up the sound of the fire crackling nearby*

Y'see it's not just one fire for the top table as you'll find elsewhere. The old king showed his wealth and generosity to all his guests, with fires the full length of the hall.

*SFX: A further fanfare of trumpets*

Those trumpets sound for each new course. And what food! From suckling pigs to skylarks.

I mind one winter in particular. At New Year 1541 we held a mighty feast. Even the masons working on the new palace yonder laid down their tools and joined in the revels. I remember it clearly.

*SFX: General noise of conversation and music from the minstrels' gallery fade up*

Come with me to the top of the hall. There sit the King and Queen. They look content; as well they might, for they have been blessed with a child. A son, God be praised, for a king needs an heir and Prince James is a fine wee fellow. Better still, a second child is on its way. Finally our realm feels secure and the king is full of vigour and good humour.

*SFX: Mary and James's voices are intimate, a private conversation masked to others by the noise of the feast. It is as if we are sat between them*

**Mary:**

How sweet to hear minstrels instead of masons

**James:**

You will not begrudge it once the work is done, and we will have a home to match those you were raised in.

**Mary:**

When you granted me this castle I little thought you would add a palace. We shall have many good years here James. ...oh...

**James:**

A kick?

**Mary:**

Aye, a strong one. I am certain he is a boy.

**James:**

A second son eh. That would be a blessing to the Stewart line.

*SFX: Hall ambiance dies away*

**Lyndsay:**

If only it were possible to hold back time and keep the precious moment. But the following years brought forth one tragedy after another.

Mary and James's second child, a son, was born in April but the baby developed a fever and died. Their loss was doubled when their first child fell ill within days of his brother and also died.

Mary bore these tragedies with great resolve. James however descended into deep depression.

**Female Narrator:**

In the Spring of 1542 Queen Mary became pregnant again, but this joyful news was soon overshadowed by fresh English raids on the border.

The King moved constantly about the region with his nobles and troops. The fighting continued into winter. Then in November whilst at Falkland Palace the King fell severely ill.

**Lyndsay:**

At the start of December news reached us from Linlithgow Palace. God had blessed the Queen with a healthy child, albeit a daughter.

I prayed this intelligence would strengthen the spirit of the King who lay in his sickbed. Alas it did not. A week later a rider came in the winter dark to bring us tiding of the King's death.

It was a bleak end to two hard years.

Queen Mary had lost two sons and a husband. We had lost two male heirs and a King. In the moment of his death a tiny babe became our Queen.

I worked frantically with the clergy to arrange her coronation here at Stirling. This time nearly thirty years since the last, I was the chief herald proclaiming a child as monarch. She bore her mother's name, and all of Europe would come to know her as "Mary, Queen of Scots".

*Chorus of voices: Long live the Queen - voices treated to simulate the acoustics of the chapel*

**Female Narrator:**

Exit through the narrow corner doorway and go up the stairs. If you require assistance, please ask a member of staff. Once you are in the next room, press the green button.

(XX 10)

## **STOP 9. KING'S OUTER HALL**

### **Female Narrator:**

We have now entered the Castles' Royal Apartments.

This fine palace was built on the orders of King James the fifth, and its construction was begun around 1538. However the comfortable life he hoped to spend here with his Queen, Mary of Guise was cut short just four years later.

The king died from a mysterious illness during a long military campaign defending the Scottish borders against sustained the English raiding. With the country in turmoil the crown passed to his infant daughter Mary, who would later be known as "Mary Queen of Scots".

As we explore these apartments we will hear more of these events. Our guide through this story will be Sir David Lyndsay, the chief royal herald. In today's world we might think of him as a high-ranking civil servant, but he was also a diplomat and a poet.

Now go into the next room and press the green button.

(XX 10 – King’s Inner Hall)

## **STOP 10. KING'S INNER HALL**

### **Female Narrator:**

You are now in the heart of the Royal Palace. Following ten years of research Historic Scotland have refurbished these apartments as they may have appeared in the fifteen-forties.

This room, the King's Inner Hall, was intended to give audience to the most important ambassadors, nobles and clergymen.

The palace is designed as two halves, which mirror each other, one side for the King, the other for the Queen. Each has a progression of increasingly exclusive and prestigious halls.

King James probably died before his apartments were complete, so this half of the palace remains unfurnished.

### **Lyndsay:**

What do you make of the ceiling? The carvings are full of matter for those who can read them. The king is shown surrounded by his family, his royal descent being proof of his right to rule.

Wisdom and Strength are pictured too, Roman emperors and ancient heroes. Here are shown the symbols of a full and glorious reign. It grieves me deeply that our King was taken from us with such great promise unfulfilled.

Instead of that majestic peace in 1543 we faced another catastrophe. Our forces were worn down and our state ungoverned. The situation was confused. Our infant Queen required a Regent, an adult to rule in her place. Many hoped that Mary of Guise would hold power for her daughter, but it was the Earl of Arran who gained parliament's support and the regency.

Arran had a strong claim being second in line to the throne but many thought him weak and indecisive. Mary of Guise had shown good judgement and courage.

For a time war did not come. King Henry knew his strength and chose a less costly way to gain our throne. Arran was ready to appease King Henry when he put forth his terms for an "eternal peace", a treaty sealed by the marriage of our infant Queen to his own son Edward.

There was much support in our parliament. We feared war; some were in King Henry's pay. Most agreed it would buy a little time to make other plans.

So the treaty was agreed. King Henry's son, prince Edward, would inherit four lands. England, Wales and Ireland were already his birthright. Scotland was to be his wedding gift.

But Queen Mary was not yet handed over, and other powers were at work about this court.

**Female Narrator:**

Now go through the door by the fireplace and press the green button.

(XX 11 – King's Bedchamber)

## **STOP 11. KING'S BEDCHAMBER**

### **Female Narrator:**

This is the bedchamber, the most exclusive of the King's rooms.

Two doors by the fireplace give access to small rooms which could have served as office, oratory or privy as occasion demanded.

Traditionally the bedchamber was where the King's closest friends joined him to play cards, hear music and discuss affairs of state. The influence of such favourites sometimes rivalled the guidance of official advisors.

### **Lyndsay:**

In truth I don't like this empty room. I have happier memories of the old bedchamber in the King's Building across the close. When James was a boy I would play him to sleep there with my lute, although he'd always want another story first. What games! "Let's be dogs Davie" he'd say and we'd run about on the floor. "Be a ghost," he'd say and I'd pull a sheet o'er my head.

Look at this fine bed, never slept in, and d'ye see upon the ceiling above the fireplace, four iron hooks. From yon should have hung the King's banner, the "cloth of estate."

Yet there are other marks of Kingship worked about, and I trust they will last: / 5 above the window, Iacobus or James the fifth, this fireplace carved with thistles and lions, and that fine unicorn.

To be a herald one must know heraldry. The unicorn represents obedience to the crown and harmony. Well there was precious little harmony in the year after the marriage deal was signed.

**Female Narrator:**

Mary of Guise naturally favoured a French alliance for Scotland and moreover was appalled at the idea of her daughter marrying into the Tudor dynasty. Gradually her own pro – French faction started to turn parliament's will. By the year's end they had prevailed and the marriage treaty was overturned. This meant war, but King Henry's army would not venture north till spring.

*SFX: Sound of door swinging on hinges and a commotion of feet comes in under the end of the next line*

**Lyndsay:**

It was a day in May 1544 when the Queen Mother and her ladies burst through yon door.

**Mary:**

Lyndsay I have found you. Please we have no time for bowing, straighten your back and attend.

I have news that the English fleet is harboured at Leith. Arran's army have fled the field. Edinburgh has fallen and all but the castle is aflame. Raiding parties have crossed into Fife.

Where is my daughter?

**Lindsay:**

With her Nurse and Maid your Grace. Quite safe.

**Mary:**

There are rumours of kidnap afoot Lyndsay. I know not whom I may trust. Will you hold her in your special care, as you did her father?

**Lindsay:**

As if she were my own child madam.

**Mary:**

Bless you Davie. Please summon Lord Erskine. Stirling may be besieged and the castle must be made ready.

**Lyndsay:**

The castle was in truth lightly defended. Praise God that the King of France had recently sent us a gift of cannon and crew. The English raided to within six miles of Stirling before turning back.

**Female Narrator:**

Move on into the next room and press the green button.

(XX 12 – Queen’s Bedchamber)

## **STOP 12. QUEEN'S BEDCHAMBER**

### **Female Narrator:**

We are in the Queen's apartments. These mirror the King's in layout and function. Mary of Guise outlived her husband by eighteen years and in that time these rooms became a focus for her dynamic and cosmopolitan court.

In this room Mary would have worked, prayed, washed, dressed and eaten private meals. Despite the stately bed it is not certain that she slept here, a small chamber somewhere nearby possibly served that purpose. This magnificent bed was part of a ritual of rising and retiring.

To be received as a guest in this most private of rooms was a great honour, and Mary understood the political nature of each personal act. Her ladies in waiting were constant companions, a protocol that permitted her close association with her court, ladies and gentlemen.

### **Lyndsay:**

Life in the palace involves a good deal of waiting about; servants, soldiers and courtiers, all filling up benches and hanging around corridors. This room has two fine chairs.

I mind a summer evening when the Queen Mother allowed me the particular honour of taking a seat. It was a month since the sack of Edinburgh and the country was still in turmoil.

**Mary:**

Did your hear Lyndsay, they burnt down Holyrood Abbey. The soldiers desecrated the tomb of my husband and our two bairns. Where was our army? Where was Arran? I hold the coward responsible.

**Lyndsay:**

Many would say M'am that our forces were sorely outnumbered. Yet I agree, they were poorly led. Our nobles feud and desert. Lord Lennox has abandoned us for the English court and will marry Lady Douglas from that other family of turncoats.

**Mary:**

Indeed. The Douglas's change their allegiance as the wind. And who knows the mind of Arran? What chaos this is. And always I fear for my daughter the Queen. Can King Henry not see that the Scots will never yield her up to a tyrant, nor have his son as their King?

I believe Lyndsay that I must look abroad for help. My own house of Lorraine is powerful, and I write to my brother the Duc de Guise often. He will answer with actions. It is our nature.

Observe the carved bosses above your head, those three birds killed with a single arrow, that famous feat by my ancestor Godfrey de Boullion.

**Lyndsay:**

The worthy leader of the first crusade.

**Mary:**

Three targets with a single strike; I have them in mind: The hated marriage, the turncoat lords and the weak regent.

**Lyndsay:**

Yet Arran was chosen by parliament. Who else would they accept?  
Who can we even trust?

**Mary:**

My ancestor Godfrey ruled the Kingdom of Jerusalem, and who could the people better trust to protect their queen than her own mother.

We shall arrange a council here at Stirling. Arran shall be charged with the destruction of the realm, and I shall declare my intention to replace him.

**Lyndsay:**

I knew then that there was hope; Mary of Guise had loosed her  
arrow.

**Female Narrator:**

Continue to the next room and press the green button.

(XX 13 – Queen’s Inner Hall)

## **STOP 13. QUEEN'S INNER HALL**

### **Female Narrator:**

The visual grandeur of this, the Queen's Inner Hall incorporates quotations from the Bible and other sources in Latin and French.

*SFX: The following lines are performed by members of the cast in non-character voices and layered over each other in a sound collage*

### **All Voices:**

A time to weep, and a time to laugh

Vanity, Vanity all is vanity

A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together

A time of war, and a time of peace

### **Female Narrator:**

This room was sometimes used for formal dining. Notably Mary of Guise's guests at table were often mixed in nationality, gender and rank, which added to her reputation for diplomacy and insight. This was in marked contrast to the English court where King Henry dined alone, served by his nobles on bended knee.

### **Lyndsay:**

The splendour of this hall and the timeless words writ upon the walls 'mind me how small we are in the schemes of grace and fate.

Our careful plans were soon in tatters. Arran fled the council at Stirling and held his own rival parliament in Edinburgh. Our state was riven in two. At last a deal was made: Arran remained Regent but with Mary of Guise as a chief advisor.

Change was afoot in England as well. January 1547 saw the death of our old foe King Henry, God rest his soul (*said with deep sarcasm*). We hoped briefly for a change of policy, but the English still insisted that the old marriage treaty be honoured, and Mary Queen of Scots be delivered as a wife to their new King.

However, France also had a new King, Henri the second. He sent us fresh help in the form of the great military architect Signore Ubaldini. The good signore would oversee the construction of a mighty artillery spur to defend this castle.

In September 1547 the feared invasion came. The armies met east of Edinburgh, whilst at Stirling the masons were busy again fortifying the town walls.

In the aftermath of battle I was summoned to this room.

**Mary:**

Chief Herald, what news from our riders?

**Lyndsay:**

Earl Arran himself has come fresh from battle with grievous tidings. We have lost perhaps six thousand men and the army is routed. We lie open to the enemy by land and sea.

**Mary:**

Against such force we cannot hope to survive a siege. Our new works here are barely begun. You must do as we have planned and take Mary to the isle of Inchmahome. The monks there will give you shelter.

**Lindsay:**

And that is exactly what happened. In secrecy I took the child along with her own small court of playmates to that holy isle. Thankfully the English did not press north, nor yet did they retreat. The enemy remained at our door.

**Female Narrator:**

Proceed to the next room and press the green button.

(XX 14 – Queen’s Outer Hall)

## **STOP 14. QUEEN'S OUTER HALL**

### **Female Narrator:**

The Queen's Outer Hall, is where much of the daily business of court was conducted. The Queen Mother would have dined here regularly. A trestle table was set along the length of the room with Mary's chair closest to the fire, her guests to her left in descending rank.

Daily meals were less formal than the diplomatic entertainments held in the Inner Hall, and we know that this room could also be cleared for dancing.

### **Lyndsay:**

A lively dance on a winter night is a fine thing to drive out the cold, and we've had some fine nights in this hall, and one particularly happy day as I recall.

Miraculously from our defeat on the field came political victory. After four long years of war there were few left in Scotland to support the English marriage.

*SFX: Sounds of conversation including the voices of children. We hear the sound of objects being dragged and stacked. At some point a door opens and closes. We hear calls echoing from the corridor beyond.*

I remember the day when I stood here with the little queen and her mother. The child and her court made ready to depart. She was to leave our country to marry a prince, but our fears had all turned to joy, for the prince was the Dauphin of France. Through her mother's diplomacy our old alliance was made anew.

The English presence on our soil had hastened the marriage agreement and our departure was swiftly arranged.

I stood here as the young queen tugged at her mother's sleeve.

**Mary Queen of Scots:**

Maman – when I am on the ship can I steer?

**Mary:**

We will see Mary

**Mary Queen of Scots:**

Please, Davie would let me.

**Lyndsay:**

We will ask the captain. The helmsman might even help you.

**Mary:**

Now go and get your cloak from Janet. What news from Dumbarton  
Lindsay?

**Lyndsay:**

They await their Queen in readiness. King Henri will send his royal  
barge within the week.

**Mary:**

He sends much more than a ship. He has promised gold for our war  
chest and troops to follow. Most precious of all a French Dukedom  
for Arran.

**Lyndsay:**

Is that his price?

**Mary:**

Yes. He will become the Duke of Chatellerauld and with that title comes immense wealth. He will relinquish the regency and I shall rule. With Mary safely engaged and abroad perhaps we shall have peace at last.

*SFX: Room noises fade out.*

**Lyndsay:**

So we rode west to Dumbarton and made our sad farewells. It was two more years till mother and daughter met again, in Rouen. Her bonny girl was by then flourishing in the French court. In that time Mary of Guise had brokered peace with England and their army had departed. When she met with the young King Edward VI in London he made her a gift of a diamond ring.

I have often thought how great the temptation must have been to set sail with her daughter from Dumbarton and return to the home and family she loved. To leave this divided country with its feuding nobles and hostile borders. But instead she chose to honour the vows of her coronation and keep faith with her adopted people, and for that I loved her dearly.

**Female Narrator:**

Please exit through the corridor and once outside press the green button.

(XX 15 – Palace Exit Lower West)

## **STOP 15. PALACE EXIT LOWER WEST**

### **Female Narrator:**

We have now finished our tour of the royal apartments, but there is much more to see.

Stirling palace is testimony to the many skilled craftworkers who laboured here over four centuries ago. You can see examples of their work close up in the “Stirling Heads” gallery, which contains the original carved heads that are replicated in the King’s Inner Hall. Its entrance is up the steps on your left.

Don’t forget, you can use this audio-guide to explore the rest of the castle. Just keep an eye out for the signs and panorama boards. They have numbers on them; if you key the number into your player, the commentary will start automatically. If you need further assistance, Historic Scotland staff will be happy to help.

## **STOP 16. STIRLING HEADS (UPPER WEST GALLERY)**

### **Male Narrator:**

In the next gallery, you'll see the original oak carvings that once graced the ceiling of James the Fifth's palace in the fifteen-forties. Known as the Stirling Heads, they're portraits of real and mythological characters.

The Heads survived on the palace ceiling until its partial collapse in the late eighteenth century, when they were dispersed and some were destroyed. Many may have disappeared altogether. But now, new research on the surviving Heads has helped to identify the figures, giving us unique insight into the world of King James the Fifth.

The intricately carved Stirling Heads are some of the most precious objects of the Scottish Renaissance. But they weren't just decorative; they also embodied some of the key messages that the king wished to convey.

When you're ready, move into the next gallery and meet some of the characters of James the Fifth's royal court.

## **STOP 17. THE STIRLING HEADS**

### **Male Narrator:**

These Stirling Heads are portraits of King James the Fifth and his immediate family.

On the top left, you can see his mother, Margaret Tudor, daughter of the English king Henry the Seventh.

And just underneath, her brother, King James' overbearing Uncle, Henry the Eighth.

James himself is in the centre. On the right are both his French wives; his first wife, Madeleine de Valois, daughter of the King of France,

and his second wife, Mary of Guise, shown as a bride, with a flower and flowing hair.

These Heads declare the strength of James the Fifth's royal family alliances with both England and France. By displaying them on the ceiling of the Inner Hall of Stirling Palace, King James could sit in state with his credentials proudly displayed above him.



## **STOP 18. LOVE & MARRIAGE**

### **Male Narrator:**

These two Stirling Heads are of dancing male children, or ‘putti’. Putti were a symbol from the Italian Renaissance, representing the triumph of divine love.

Their inclusion here is not surprising, as the palace was built to celebrate James the Fifth’s marriage. Visitors to his court would have understood the putti as a reference to Cupid, the Roman god of love.

And they may have held another meaning. Putti were often carved on Italian tombs, carrying triumphal wreaths and garlands. Their presence was meant to symbolise the victory of fame over death. Perhaps their inclusion in Stirling Palace reflects the young king’s ambition to be remembered in perpetuity.

## **STOP 19. EXAMINING THE EVIDENCE**

### **Male Narrator:**

The exhibition you see today is the result of a decade of hard work. Historic Scotland, together with historians, archaeologists and conservators, has undertaken detailed research into the Stirling Heads to establish their original design and appearance.

Among the many surprising discoveries made was the source of the timber; oak, felled in Poland in fifteen-thirty-nine, and brought all the way to Scotland to be carved into the Stirling Heads.

Another revelation was that the heads were originally painted in bright colours. By carrying out painstaking analysis of the tiny fragments of surviving paint, experts have helped to reconstruct the original colour scheme of Stirling Palace.

## **STOP 20. HOW TO WIN FRIENDS & INFLUENCE PEOPLE**

### **Male Narrator:**

In this case are some of James the Fifth's ancestors, together with other men of power and influence in his life.

On the bottom left is his father, James the Fourth,

and above him is James' great-great grandfather, James the First.

They were included to remind the court of James the Fifth's royal Stewart lineage, stretching back for almost two hundred years, affirming his right to rule.

On the top right is the Spanish ruler Charles the Fifth; Holy Roman Emperor and inheritor of four European dynasties. His vast territories stretched across Europe, and the New World; in Latin America and the Caribbean.

By showing himself shoulder-to-shoulder with men such as Charles, James the Fifth asserted his status as one of the most powerful men in Europe.

## **STOP 21. A KINGLY CODE**

### **Male Narrator:**

These four figures in their fantastical dress may represent 'The Worthies'; a group of historical, biblical and legendary heroes who upheld a knightly code and embodied honour and virtue.

The figure on the top left, with the elaborate headgear, is female. There were in fact nine female, as well as nine male, Worthies.

James the Fifth fostered a cult of chivalry at the Scottish court. He encouraged the knightly pursuits of heraldry, tournaments, and jousting. These spectacular pageants reinforced his heroic status as a man of action. They also served as a reminder that he was a Christian knight, a defender of the faith.

But there's another message here. Royal rulers created chivalric orders to encourage allegiance, and to mark political alliances. So the Worthies, looking down from the ceiling, would have reminded the nobles of James the Fifth's court of their duty to obey the king.

## **STOP 22. LEARNED LEADERS**

### **Male Narrator:**

Three of these Heads show clean-shaven men, with curly locks, wearing the armour of a military hero. They represent Roman emperors and generals.

Members of James the Fifth's court had visited Italy. There, they would have seen frescoes of Roman emperors and generals adorning the walls of palazzos and public buildings. On their return, they may well have described these 'Halls of Fame'. And there were also illustrated books of 'ornament prints', full of classical figures. They may have provided a visual reference for the carvers, as the Heads on display here are strikingly similar. If you look at the bottom right information panel, you will see an example of one of such print; it's of Julius Caesar.

With these Heads, James the Fifth was placing himself among the Roman rulers; men who provided a strong moral example to follow. He was also demonstrating his learning and knowledge of the classical world, an essential component of kingly virtue.

## **STOP 23. MEET THE COURT**

### **Male Narrator:**

The Stirling Heads in this case are thought to be real people who lived and served at James the Fifth's court, a very cosmopolitan and cultured group.

At the top, on the far right, you can see a woman dressed for a masque; a kind of theatrical performance. She's holding a rose and wearing a great, curved headdress.

Just below her, is a poet. One particularly Scottish tradition was 'flyting', where two poets would exchange poetic insults, and use their skills to amuse, educate and influence the court.

On the left of the case, are four female figures with incredibly elaborate costume. Perhaps even more than today, dress was hugely important in the sixteenth century, and the carvers have certainly taken care to show every detail. In fact, we know exactly what styles they're wearing.

The lady at the top, to the right, with the banded headdress and hanging veil, is wearing a 'French Hood'. Her full sleeves are a

Spanish style, created by open seams with the taffeta lining pulled through to form puffs.

The lady to her left is dressed in the latest Italian fashion; a daringly low-cut dress with exaggerated sleeves that end above the elbow, and a heavily braided hairdo, with wayward tresses pulled out to the side.

Borrowing elements from Spanish and Italian styles was typical of French fashion. And it's known that James the Fifth's bride, Mary of Guise, brought her own, French, tailor to create French-style dresses for her and her ladies at court.

By wearing the latest fashions from Paris, Milan and London, the courtiers, as well as the king and queen, displayed their wealth, good taste and European leanings.

## **STOP 24. DO AS THE ROMANS DID**

### **Male Narrator:**

These Heads are similar to antique busts of Roman emperors. Indeed, the one in the centre is the Emperor Titus. They remind us of the connections between the Scottish court and mainland Europe.

At the time, Italian sculptors were making copies of Classical busts. They were avidly collected by the French king, Francis the First. James the Fifth and his courtiers stayed at the French court for nine months in fifteen-thirty-six, where they would almost certainly have seen these busts. But there was also a strong tradition of Scots scholars travelling to Italy, where they would have seen copies of Classical sculptures, as well as the originals.

More classically inspired sculptures can be found on the outside of the palace. There, Classical gods and goddesses stand next to an almost life-size sculpture of James the Fifth. So both the interior and exterior of the palace were used to present the king as a learned and virtuous ruler.

## **STOP 25. HERCULES THE HERO**

### **Male Narrator:**

These four Stirling Heads show a bearded man of action. On the left, twice, he gamely grapples with a snake,

on the top right, he wrestles a lion,

and on the bottom right, he poses with an enormous club.

This is the Greek mythological hero Hercules. He's shown completing some of his famous 'Twelve Labours'; slaying the Lernaean Hydra, a fearsome nine-headed serpent, and dispatching the Nemean Lion. The giant club is one of the weapons he used, made from the entire branch of a wild olive tree.

Hercules was a demi-god, the offspring of the god Zeus and a mortal woman. The Labours were extraordinary feats no ordinary man had ever performed. By completing them, he proved himself a powerful hero and gained his place among the gods.

By the time of James the Fifth, the myth of Hercules was hugely popular and the king himself owned a set of tapestries depicting his

Twelve Labours. Hercules was seen as an example of the ideal man, embodying strength, courage, moral virtue and compassion; something any king should aspire to.

## **STOP 27. CHAPEL ROYAL**

### **Female Narrator:**

This magnificent Chapel Royal was built by King James the Sixth in fifteen-ninety-four. It was completed in less than seven months, in time for the baptism of his first child, Prince Henry.

There's little now to hint at its original appearance, but the entrance door, flanked by six pairs of windows provides an important clue. For directly opposite, was a pulpit. At the time, Scotland had just become protestant. Now the Word of God, preached by a minister from his pulpit, was more important than the Mass, celebrated by a priest at the altar.

This chapel was the last building at Stirling to be built by Scottish royalty. Less than ten years after little Henry's baptism, James the Sixth travelled to London to be crowned James the First of England. And that was effectively the last that Scotland saw of its rulers.

But they did return. And the elaborate, painted frieze that runs around the walls is testament: At regular intervals, there's a repeated, rectangular motif.

Inside, is a crown, with a sword and scepter crossed below it;  
Scotland's crown jewels.

And there are initials: C R. These stand for Carolus Rex, and refer to King Charles the First, James' second son. The frieze was painted in preparation for his coronation visit in sixteen-thirty-three.

The artist who painted the frieze, Valentine Jenkin, clearly found the chapel too dull for his liking. If you look at the end wall, high up towards the ceiling, you'll see that he has painted a false window!

## **STOP 28. GREAT HALL EXTERIOR**

### **Male Narrator:**

At one stage, this building was transformed into an army barracks, but today, it has been spectacularly restored, complete with the distinctive, honey-coloured 'King's Gold' lime-plaster.

It is James the Fourth's Great Hall, the grandest element in his ambitious building scheme. It could seat as many as five hundred people, and in fifteen-o-three, when it was finally complete, it was the largest secular space in the kingdom.

The interior is even more magnificent, with its hammer-beam roof, two musicians' galleries and five fireplaces!

Why not go inside and have a look?

## **STOP 29. PRINCE'S WALK**

### **Female Narrator:**

We humble souls are very privileged to be walking on this terrace, overlooking the Queen Anne Garden. Five hundred years ago, only the queens of Scotland with their royal children would have been able to stroll here; hence the name – Prince's Walk.

If you stand so you face the palace, the impressive building to your left is the Prince's Tower, so named because little Prince Henry, the eldest son of James the Sixth, took his lessons here. By that time, the building was already a hundred years old.

From here, you can also admire the sculptures that adorn Stirling Palace at close hand. And some of them are curious indeed.

If you look up to the right of the middle window you'll see a figure with wings, horns, side-whiskers and a tail. That's the Devil himself. But look again. He's also sporting a pendulous bosom.

To find out more, press the green button.

(XX 290 – Palace Sculptures)

## **STOP 290. PALACE SCULPTURES**

### **Male Narrator:**

Today, we're used to representations of the devil that show him as a male figure, with horns and cloven hooves, a bit like a Classical satyr. But in the sixteenth century, the devil was sometimes imagined as having breasts, making him less of a 'he' and more of an androgynous character. And he was sometimes pictured with a feline, or animal-like face, more like the grotesque visage we see here.

The devil has probably been included to remind visitors of the eternal struggle between good and evil, a key part of court imagery.

Along the top of the building are four male figures.

One holds a sword,  
another a crossbow,  
another carries a shield with what could be a large sun on it,  
and one fires a gun into the air.

These are 'garitours', or men-at-arms.

There were also flesh-and-blood garitours in the garrison at Stirling Castle. And it was their job to keep watch from the wall-heads. But

their stone counterparts are more than just watchmen. A Scots allegorical poem from the early sixteenth century describes garitours as 'loyalties' or 'Lawties' in Scots, and gives each particular virtues and qualities.

So, in antithesis to the devil, these figures may represent a moral, as well as military, defence of Stirling Castle.

## **STOP 30. FRENCH SPUR**

### **Male Narrator:**

Here you are on the gun platform known as the French Spur. You can count eight guns here now, but there was originally provision for eleven. If you go down the stone steps, you'll find openings for two more heavy guns protecting the main entrance to the castle. And over to the left of the green plaque **(pause)** you'll see a single, smaller opening for a gun protecting the length of castle wall beyond.

What a wonderful view you get from this platform! You can see why they put the guns here. Look out over the wall to where the plaque is. The most obvious feature is that tree-clad hill across the valley, the one with the tall, narrow tower on top of it. That's the Wallace Monument, built to commemorate William Wallace, the great Scottish patriot. It was there on that hill seven hundred years ago that Wallace lay in wait with his men before doing battle with the English.

Now let your eye fall down in a straight line from the Wallace Monument. On the flat plain, you'll come to the River Forth, twisting and bending as it travels on to the sea. Follow that river to the left

until you come to two bridges crossing the river. It was near there that William Wallace - Braveheart himself - did battle. To hear about the famous Battle of Stirling Bridge, simply press the green button.

(XX 300 – Braveheart & the Battle of Stirling Bridge)

## **STOP 300. BRAVEHEART & THE BATTLE OF STIRLING BRIDGE**

### **Female Narrator:**

The battle of Stirling Bridge was fought over the flat ground behind the cemetery in front of you, on the eleventh of September twelve-ninety-seven. The English king, Edward the First had invaded the previous year. A power struggle for an empty Scottish throne had divided the nation and Edward, through a mixture of ruthless politics and military might, had forced an English governor on this country to rule in his stead.

The governor, the Earl of Surrey, now faced a popular uprising of Scots lead by a lowland knight called William Wallace.

Wallace took up a secluded position on top of Abbey Craig- that's the prominent tree-clad hill now crowned by the tall Wallace monument- and from there he looked down on the English. In contrast to the professional army waiting on the plain below, Wallace commanded a small force of volunteers. Few of his men were mounted, whilst the opposition had heavily armoured cavalry.

However the two armies were not divided along purely national lines. The English force also contained a company of feared Welsh bowmen as well as many Scots. Much of Scotland's lowland nobility had part English blood, and issues of loyalty were complex.

Despite his superior army the Earl of Surrey clearly saw the weakness of his position, holding the lower ground, and needing to cross the river.

The only obvious crossing was a wooden bridge - close to where the stone one now stands; a bridge only wide enough to take two riders abreast; it formed a deadly bottleneck.

Playing for time Essex sent two priests to parley with Wallace in his camp.

**Priest:**

We beg of you Sir William, as you are a good Christian to lay down your weapons and come humbly before our Viceroy Essex in peace. Let there be no bloodshed here.

**Wallace:**

Return to your friend's father, and tell them we come here with no

peaceful intent, but ready for battle, determined to avenge the wrongs done to us and set our country free. Let them take the field; we are ready to meet them, beard to beard."

*SFX: The sound of military drums striking up into a march rhythm. Horses and men moving forward*

**Female Narrator:**

Spurred by this response Essex ordered his troops forward. Despite a Scottish knight in his command pointing out a nearby ford where sixty riders could cross abreast, Essex sent his troops across the narrow bridge. Wallace made the most of this mistake. He waited till the men across were just as many as he could defeat.

*SFX: A great roar of men commencing a charge, which then fades under the narrative and merges into sounds of battle*

Then his rebel army charged down the hill to meet the English cavalry who, slowed by an uphill charge, were overcome by a forest of spearheads. The English began to retreat and panic took hold. Knights forced into the river were drowned by the weight of their armour. Foot soldiers hemmed in against the riverbank had no space to fight and no retreat. It was a massacre. All in all one

hundred English cavalry and five thousand infantry were slain. The Earl of Surrey chose not to cross and made good his escape.

*SFX: Sounds of battle fade out*

Stirling Bridge was a disaster for the English, undoing at a stroke all of Edward's gains in the previous year. The victory was made all the sweeter because a hastily-assembled army, led by a lowly knight, had seen off one of Europe's best fighting machines. It was Wallace's finest hour.

## **STOP 31. PANORAMA**

***SFX: Cue bird song, inc. Peacocks, and sounds of bowls clicking***

### **Male Narrator:**

Standing here on these battlements, gazing out over the green and pleasant countryside, we get some impression not only of the peace but also of the pace of courtly life.

Here, in the pretty Queen Anne Garden, the royal family strolled with their courtiers, talking of politics or maybe of love, watching entertainments and playing games such as bowls. Peacocks strutted about them, and, out of sight, the royal gardeners tended to the flowers and shrubs.

Now look over the castle wall, down into the valley below. You can make out the ghostly outlines of another, much bigger garden. That's known as the King's Knot Garden. This formal pleasure ground was re-landscaped for the homecoming of King Charles the First, in around sixteen-twenty-eight. It would have had neat rows of box hedges and raised beds.

And beyond the King's Knot, stretching far into the distant Gargunnock Hills, lay the King's Park - the royal forest, where the king and his knights spent their days hunting deer and wild boar. The hunt was often arranged so that the killing of the stag or boar took place within sight of this wall. Enabling the queen and the ladies of the court to enjoy the spectacle - and cheer their menfolk home.

## **STOP 32. PANORAMA**

### **Male Narrator:**

The feature that most catches our eye from this viewpoint is the tower of the church of the Holy Rude, Stirling's ancient parish church. Do you see it? ~~Sticking up~~ through the trees beyond the graveyard? The bells once housed there rang out to celebrate many a happy event in the town - and the nation's - history. But perhaps never louder or longer than when Mary Queen of Scots' little boy, Prince James, was crowned King James the Sixth of Scotland over four hundred years ago - for the coronation took place in that very church.

But the church tower is remembered now not so much for its bells as for the big gun that was mounted there a century after that joyous ceremony. To hear why, press the green button.

(XX 320 – Cromwell's Big Guns)

## **STOP 320. CROMWELL'S BIG GUNS**

***SFX: Drum roll***

### **Male Narrator:**

For a moment, put yourself in a soldier's boots as he stood here on the castle battlements three hundred and fifty years ago. Over the rough ground in front of you, you see the enemy hauling a great gun to the top of the church tower. And you know full well that when that gun is in position, you are well within its range!

***SFX: Cue big bang***

The year SIXTEEN-FIFTY-ONE was a troubled time for Scotland. Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector of England, had marched into Scotland with sixteen thousand men the previous year, and routed the Scots in battle. Town after town fell to the English. In time, Cromwell's men entered Stirling town. Their commander immediately issued an ultimatum to the governor here in the castle - surrender, or die! The garrison chose to fight. The siege began.

***SFX: More guns***

The English guns spewed forth their murderous contents. The gunners here returned fire. For seven days, the bombardment went on. Casualties mounted, and both the castle and the church were badly damaged in the cross-fire. The scars are visible yet - and if you look over to the left and back towards the castle, at the twin-towered gate (**slight pause**), you'll probably be able to see the pock-marks made by the incoming shot. Gradually, the guns took their toll. And when a mortar shell landed right in the heart of the castle, the garrison knew it was time to surrender.

***SFX: Massive explosion, then sounds of soldiers looting***

The victorious English entered the castle, looting and pillaging as they went. Their booty included forty guns, enough beef, beer and wine to feed an army for a month - and most priceless of all, the Public Records of Scotland, the national archives hastily brought to Stirling from Edinburgh Castle shortly before. For the next eight years, Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector of England, also became Lord Protector of Scotland.

## **STOP 33. THE OVERPORT BATTERY**

### **Male Narrator:**

This platform carried the main artillery defending the approach from the town. You'll see two guns here today, but originally there would have been six, one for each of the openings here.

The guns originally placed here three hundred years ago have long since been removed. But the two mounted here now still have a fascinating story to tell. Walk over to the guns themselves and take a closer look.

**(Pause)** You'll see that there are the two stubs projecting from either side of the gun barrels - these parts supported the gun on its carriage. Can you make out the word CARRON? This was the name of the company that made them two hundred years ago. And Carron Ironworks was based in Falkirk, within sight of this battery. To hear more about this world-famous company, press the green button.

(XX 330 – Carron & the Castle Guns)

## **STOP 330. CARRON AND THE CASTLE GUNS**

***SFX: Ironworks***

### **Male Narrator:**

In its heyday two hundred years ago, Carron was the largest ironworks in Europe. It employed over two thousand men and cast anything from gates to guns.

On top of each gun barrel you'll see the royal cipher - the initials G R with the number THREE intertwined around the letter G. They stand for - Georgius Rex Three. King George the Third was king of Great Britain in 1815, the year of the Battle of Waterloo.

By then, Carron had become a household name - thanks to its most famous product, a deadly gun known as the carronade. Its murderous effect and easy manoeuvrability made them firm favourites with two of Great Britain's most famous military commanders, Admiral Nelson and the Duke of Wellington.

The guns here, though, aren't carronades. They are more conventional artillery pieces, firing balls between six and nine pounds in weight a distance of about a mile. That means they could easily reach beyond the golf course and into the valley beyond. But

the people living in the houses beyond them would have been quite safe.

Such was Carron's fame that people from all over Europe came to see what curiosities lay behind its security gates.

After Waterloo, Carron diversified into more peaceful products - and became almost as famous for their cookers as for their carronades. But they failed in the end because they couldn't think beyond cast iron. The factory closed for good around twenty years ago.

***SFX: Slammed gate***

## **STOP 34. PANORAMA**

### **Male Narrator:**

From this viewpoint you get a marvelous view of Stirling Bridge, the battleground where William Wallace - Braveheart himself - won his great victory over the English seven hundred years ago. To hear what took place, just press the green button.

(XX 300 – also links to Braveheart & the Battle of Stirling Bridge)

## **STOP 35. THE GRAND BATTERY**

### **Male Narrator:**

You're standing on the gun platform known as the Grand Battery. The battery claims a special place in British history. For when the guns here were fired two hundred and fifty years ago, they were the last guns in any British castle to be fired in anger. For the siege of Stirling Castle by Bonnie Prince Charlie and his Jacobites in seventeen-forty-six was the last of any castle in Britain.

If you look along the gun barrels and out through the gun embrasures, you'll see how important the position of these guns was. They all point towards one feature - old Stirling Bridge down in the Forth valley below. Stirling Bridge was the main crossing point over the River Forth into Stirling in days gone by, and that was the direction the military authorities expected the Jacobites to come from. And they did. To hear what happened, press the green button.

(XX 350 – Bonnie Prince Charlie & the Last Siege)

## **STOP 350. BONNIE PRINCE CHARLIE & THE LAST SIEGE**

### **Male Narrator:**

Bonnie Prince Charlie had one purpose in mind when he besieged Stirling Castle two hundred and fifty years ago - to reclaim the throne of Great Britain for the Stewart dynasty.

### ***SFX: Sounds of battle***

Less than a year earlier, he'd arrived in Scotland to pursue the cause of his father - James Edward Stewart. The name James in Latin is Jacobus - hence his supporters were known as Jacobites.

### ***Music***

Oh, what heady days they were, those first months of what proved to be the last Jacobite uprising, the famous 'forty-five'. And what excitement in the Jacobite ranks as they threaded their way round past Stirling and on towards Edinburgh. The garrison here in the castle could do no more than watch from these battlements - and fire off a few token shots.

### ***SFX: Gun fire***

If only Prince Charles had heeded the advice of his generals who urged him to consolidate his hold on Scotland before taking England. Then the course of British history might have turned out very differently. But he didn't. He moved on. Carlisle; Manchester; Derby. And there he halted - less than a hundred miles from the gates of London.

The truth was slowly dawning. There'd been little outpouring of Jacobite sympathy on the long march south. No news that France had invaded. The Jacobite leaders, most of them from the Scottish Highlands, felt uncomfortably vulnerable. Carry on to London - death or glory - or beat a tactical withdrawal whilst there was still time. For once, Charles's stubbornness failed to win the day. They headed for home.

Within four months of marching past Stirling, Bonnie Prince Charlie found himself back here. His weary troops now tried to take the castle with the guns they'd captured on the march south. The main assault came from the Gowan Hill, the sloping ground just beyond the cemetery, directly in view from where you're standing.

### ***Music***

But no sooner had Bonnie Prince Charlie's gunners mounted their guns there than the guns here on the Grand Battery to open fire.

**SFX: Gun fire** Within hours, the Jacobites had turned and fled, their guns dismounted, their battery demolished. Three months later, Charlie's dream of regaining his father's thrones was trodden into the mud on the battlefield of Culloden, near Inverness.

## **STOP 36. GREAT KITCHENS**

### **Male Narrator:**

Here you are at the entrance to the Great Kitchens. Inside you'll find a magical scene vividly bringing to life what it must've been like working in the royal kitchens when a grand banquet was being held in the Great Hall behind you.

But before you go in, remember that what you're about to see represents just a small part of what was once a vast complex of kitchens, bake-houses, brew-houses and cellar upon cellar stuffed with every kind of food and drink imaginable. All those were housed in a vast building that rose high above your heads, and stretched the entire length of the Outer Close.

## **STOP 37. NORTH GATE**

### **Male Narrator:**

This North Gate is the oldest structure in the castle. It was built more than six hundred years ago, when King Robert the Second, the first of the Stewarts, sat on the throne.

All medieval castles had more than one gate - a main gate which the lord of the castle would use, and a back gate - a kind of tradesmen's entrance. This North Gate was the tradesmen's entrance.

You'll see a little barred window and above that a horizontal line in the stonework. The top half is a darker colour than that below. The upper floors and roof have clearly been added at a later date. In fact, they belong to the time when Stirling Castle was an army barracks.

But behind the barred window, on the first floor, you'll find two enormous fireplaces and serving hatches belonging to the time when the North Gate was part of the Great Kitchens. So why not walk up the steps and take a look inside?

## **STOP 38. PANORAMA**

### **Male Narrator:**

What a view! From the rolling Scottish Lowland hills on the left, across the broad, flat expanse of the valley, with the river Forth twisting and turning on its way to the North Sea, over to the distant peaks of the Highlands on the right. Here, at the heart of the Scottish nation, you can see why Stirling Castle has been described as ‘a huge brooch, clasping Lowlands and Highlands together’.

Today, the view is a peaceful one, over the suburbs of Stirling town. But if you’d been standing here over seven hundred years ago, you’d have witnessed a much less tranquil scene. For in medieval times, it was said that whoever held the castle rock at Stirling, held Scotland. And it was here, on this very plain, in thirteen-fourteen, that the Battle of Bannockburn was fought.

It was a veritable ‘David and Goliath’ affair; eight thousand Scots against seventeen thousand Englishmen. Before the battle, the Scottish king, Robert the Bruce, addressed his troops.

### ***SFX: Horses***

### **Bruce:**

"My lords, my people, those you see before you, clad in mail, are bent on destroying our whole nation. This day, with Our Lord Jesus Christ as commander, Saint Andrew and the martyr Saint Thomas shall fight today with the saints of Scotland for the honour of their country and their nation."

**Narrator:**

And with Bruce's words ringing in their ears, they charged into the greatest battle in Scotland's history.

But the battle might not have been fought at all, if it hadn't been for one remarkable episode. For eight years, Bruce had been waging a guerrilla war, doubtful of winning in an open fight. But on the eve of the battle itself, something took place that changed his mind.

To hear more, press the green button.

(XX 380 – Battle of Bannockburn)

## **STOP 380.      BATTLE OF BANNOCKBURN**

### **Male Narrator:**

The English cavalry appeared full of confidence in the King's Park, the ground spread out before you, on the afternoon before the battle. One of their number, Sir Henry de Bohun, spied a Scottish knight mounted on a small grey horse a little apart from the rest. The gold circlet above his helmet told him that this was none other than Bruce himself.

**SFX: Horses and battle** The opportunity for undying fame was there for the taking. So, pricking his spurs deep into his horse's side, de Bohun galloped forward.

Bruce, armed only with an axe, dodged de Bohun's levelled lance at the very last moment. And, swinging round, he brought his axe crashing down on the Englishman's helm. De Bohun's head was split in two. As the English fled the field, Bruce made his decision - he would stay and fight.

To hear what happened on the following day, press the green button.

(XX 381 – Bannockburn Continued)

## **STOP 381.      BANNOCKBURN CONTINUED**

### **Male Narrator:**

As dawn rose on the following morning - Midsummer's Day - the English found themselves badly positioned. For during the night they'd had to move down onto the marshy ground beside the Bannock Burn to water their exhausted horses.

Then, out of the fading gloom emerged the Scots. Edward Bruce, the king's younger brother, and two of the king's faithful earls, Moray and Douglas.

The English knights, still over-brimming with confidence, charged headlong at them. Within moments their commander, the Earl of Gloucester, was cut down from his horse and crushed beneath the advancing spearmen. He was one of many casualties proud Edward's army would suffer that day.

Bruce began to scent victory. As the two armies grappled at close quarters, Bruce slipped the leash off his own brigade of Highlanders. They screamed down the slope - the famous Highland Charge that would one day be feared throughout the world.

Crashing into the English, they forced them ever nearer the boggy ground beyond.

There was no escape. Many were drowned, others were cut down before they could flee. So full of dead and dying bodies was the Bannock Burn, it was said a man could cross without getting his feet wet.

Bannockburn was the defining moment in Bruce's reign.

**Music** His great victory secured for him the loyalty of a grateful people and freedom from the English yoke.

***Singing:***

*Scots, wha ha'e wi' Wallace bled,  
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led;  
Welcome to your gory bed,  
Or to victorie!*

## **STOP 39. LADIES' LOOKOUT**

### **Female Narrator:**

This terrace is now known as the Ladies' Lookout, because the ladies of the royal court stood here to admire the dramatic views of the nearby Lowland Hills and the distant Highland mountains.

From this vantage point they would have watched the men returning from the hunt and seen spectacular jousts, chivalric tournaments and even theatrical reenactments: James the Fourth was fascinated by the legends of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table and was forever mounting lavish displays in full view of the admiring ladies. But another, far more bizarre, spectacle may also have been staged here.

In fifteen-o-seven, the whole court was dazzled by King James' latest achievement; the recently completed Great Hall. But elsewhere in the castle John Damian, the king's alchemist, toiled alone in his laboratory, trying to turn base metal into the finest gold.

For five years Damian worked without success. His many critics began to carp. They called him 'the leech', because of the financial backing he was getting from his royal patron. So Damian was

forced to come up with a way of retaining the king's favour. He let it be known that he would take to the skies and fly! From the very battlements of Stirling Castle all the way to France!

And so the great day came. John Damian stepped onto the battlements, strapped in his fantastic flying machine - a great pair of wings.

**SFX: Cheering and jeering** As the crowd cheered and jeered in equal measure, the alchemist launched himself into space - and plummeted headlong slap-bang into a pile of manure. At least it broke his fall. All that was hurt was his pride.

Damian put his failure down to the fact that he had used hen feathers. As we all know, hens prefer rubbish tips to the skies. If only he'd used eagle feathers!

## **STOP 40. CHAPEL**

### **Male Narrator:**

The building behind this plaque was used as an army kitchen for two hundred years. No one took much interest in it, until archaeologists began digging up the floor. What they found, transformed it from the most unremarkable place in the castle, to one of the most fascinating.

They uncovered ten graves containing skeletons. One was an infant, the rest had lived to between fourteen and forty years of age. Radiocarbon dating showed they were buried from the thirteenth, right up to the early fifteenth, century. But what were they doing here?

We now know that this was once the site of a large chapel, built over in around fifteen-forty, when the Palace was constructed. The bodies had been buried beneath the floor of the nave.

But castle chapels weren't normal places of Christian burial. When kings and nobles died, they were usually buried in monasteries. For the rest of us mere mortals, it was the graveyard of our local parish church! So why were these bodies laid to rest in a castle?

To find out more, press the green button.

(XX 400 – Bodies Beneath the Floor)

## **STOP 400. BODIES BENEATH THE FLOOR**

### **Male Narrator:**

Two of the bodies may hold the key to the mystery; a man and a woman who died in the thirteen-hundreds. The man's forehead had a long cut that had healed over, possibly from a sword or axe wound. A barbed arrowhead was found in his ribcage, probably the cause of death. The woman had also suffered a violent death; killed by at least two blows to her skull. Other skeletons, too, bore the marks of blunt weapons: one man's skull had over thirty-one fractures.

All this suggests these people died during times of conflict. And we know that castles were generally only used for burial when they were under siege. So it's possible that the people buried here were soldiers, defending the castle from invaders, together with their wives and children.

To be buried in this prestigious location also suggests that they were of high rank. And the evidence seems to confirm this: Our male, who died in his mid-twenties, had a strong, muscular upper body and bow-legs, from extensive horse riding. So he was probably a knight.

## **STOP 41. DOUGLAS GARDEN**

### **Male Narrator:**

This garden provided a peaceful retreat from the hustle and bustle of castle life for centuries. And yet it is associated with one of the most villainous events in the castle's long history - the murder of the Earl of Douglas by King James the Second himself.

If you wish to hear about the dastardly event that took place near here on a bleak February day over five hundred years ago, just press the green button.

(XX 410 – Murder Most Foul)

## **STOP 410. MURDER MOST FOUL**

### **Male Narrator:**

Six hundred years ago, the earls of Douglas were the most powerful barons in the kingdom.

But power breeds jealousy, and there were many who despised the mighty House of Black Douglas and would bring it crashing to the ground. The king included.

And so it was that, under some pretext or other, King James the Second, enticed William, the eighth Earl of Douglas, here to the castle. It was February fourteen-fifty-two.

After the pleasantries, so the story goes, matters rapidly got out of hand.

**SFX: Sounds of violence** The arrogant Douglas managed to enrage the king, who struck out at him with a knife and cut him open from neck to navel. To make sure the vile deed was thoroughly done, a courtier struck out Douglas's brains with a pole-axe, whilst others rained down blows mercilessly. Then they flung his bloodied corpse out of a back window. It landed, would you believe, near where you're standing.

And that's how the Douglas Garden got its name.

## **STOP 42. KING'S OLD BUILDING**

### **Female Narrator:**

Perched on the highest part of the castle rock, this is the King's Old Building. It was built by James the Fourth in the fifteenth century to be his royal apartments.

In those days, it would have looked very different. In the centre was a tall, octagonal entrance tower, topped by a crenellated wall walk. It contained a spiral staircase that led up to the main apartments on the first floor, with floor to ceiling windows that afforded spectacular views towards Loch Lomond.

In eighteen eighty-one, Stirling Castle became the depot of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders (Princess Louise's); and all new recruits were trained within the precincts. This building, which was adapted for military use in the seventeenth century now houses their Museum. It tells their story from the eighteenth century right up to the present day.

Your audio tour covers some of the fascinating objects inside; from surgeon's instruments to spectacular regimental silver.

## **STOP 43. REGIMENTAL MUSEUM OF THE ARGYLL & SUTHERLAND HIGHLANDERS**

### **Male Narrator:**

Welcome to the Regimental Museum of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders.

Please enter up the stairs and move straight into the first gallery.

The museum is a treasure trove of photographs, uniforms, banners, weapons, equipment, Regimental silver, and music; which tell the Regiment's illustrious history; together with the many personal stories of the officers, soldiers and their families.

The new Regiment was formed in eighteen-eighty-one under the Cardwell Reforms. It was formed from two older Regiments: The Ninety-First Argyllshire Highlanders had served with distinction in the Cape, Peninsula and Boer Wars. "The Ninety-Third Sutherland Highlanders had a reputation for discipline and courage gained at New Orleans; as the Thin Red Line they resisted a Russian cavalry charge in the Crimea; and they relieved the Siege of Lucknow.

Since its formation, there has been virtually no conflict in which the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders have not served with bravery and valour. The Fifth and Seventh Battalions of The Royal Regiment of Scotland continue this proud tradition into current conflicts, notably Afghanistan.

As you make your way around, keep an eye out for the audio numbers in certain display cases. Key the number into your player and the commentary will start automatically; there are three in all and one of them is upstairs.

## **STOP 44. SURGEON MUNRO'S INSTRUMENTS**

### **Female Narrator:**

This wooden case with its saws and other implements looks a little like a tool kit. In fact, these are surgical instruments. Here are knives, scalpels, tourniquets, needles, forceps for holding arteries and removing fragments of bone or bullet, as well as amputating saws. Even though they are more than one hundred and fifty years old, they are still razor sharp.

The case belonged to William Munro, who served as Assistant Surgeon to the Ninety-First Argyllshire Highlanders in the eighteenth forties. Later, he also served with the Ninety-Third Sutherland Highlanders during the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny. A strange coincidence, given that the two Regiments were later amalgamated.

Munro's skill as a surgeon was highly respected and he saved many lives. He ministered to wounded and dying soldiers on the battlefield while under fire from bullet and shell. And using these very instruments, he performed operations in the Crimean field hospitals. Munro adopted modern methods, such as using chloroform to anaesthetise his patients. This allowed him to work

very quickly indeed: he could complete an amputation in around three minutes!

## **STOP 45. SILVER CENTREPIECE**

### **Male Narrator:**

This spectacular silver centrepiece was commissioned by the Officers of the Ninety-First Argyllshire Highlanders to commemorate the part the Regiment played in the South African War of eighteen-ninety-nine to nineteen-o-two.

Made by Elkington and Company of Birmingham, the design incorporates many elements of historical and allegorical significance. The figure right at the top is the Gaelic hero 'Diarmid of the Wild Boar', so called because he died of an injury received whilst slaying a boar of monstrous size. His presence associates the regiment with the Clan Campbell, as some traditions name Diarmid as founder. Indeed the Campbell crest is the head of a boar.

Slightly lower down, jutting outwards, and holding a banner aloft, is a representation of victory.

And just lower still, on the other side, is a figure with a harp. This is Ossian, the great Highland poet who told the tale of Diarmid.

Below this, on either side, are what look like flags. These are in fact Regimental Colours; those carried in the Peninsula Wars, and in front, those carried around nineteen-hundred.

Then comes the slogan 'cruachan'. This is the Campbell war cry and also the name given to Regimental mascots; since nineteen twenty-eight, these have been Shetland ponies.

Beneath is a portrait of Princess Louise, daughter of Queen Victoria and wife of the Marquess of Lorne, later the Duke of Argyll. After providing the guard of honour at their wedding, the Ninety-First became known as Princess Louise's Argyllshire Highlanders. Later, Princess Louise became the first Colonel-in-Chief of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, and designed the cap-badge, incorporating her coronet and cipher of entwined 'Ls', together with the Argyll boar and Sutherland wildcat.

Just below Princess Louise is a representation of the famous, highly prized 'Brooch of Lorne'. This reliquary brooch is said to have been torn from the cloak of Robert the Bruce in the fourteenth century by the MacDougall clan. It was taken by the Campbells in the seventeenth century, but returned some two hundred years later.

The four statuettes on the base represent members of the regiment, including Duncan Campbell of Lochnell, its first colonel. You can see him right at the front. His kilt is also on display here, in the first case in the Ninety First/ Ninety Third room.

Around the base are various Battle Honours, with an old Ninety-First badge at each corner, as well as the Campbell crest, the wild boar.

The centerpiece weighs around ninety pounds, or forty kilos, and can be dismantled into separate sections for cleaning. During official functions, its place is on a separate side table, as the dining table itself is adorned with the regimental silver, and, of course, dinner!

## **STOP 46. SAVED BY SPEAKING GAELIC**

### **Female Narrator:**

The documents and photographs in this case tell the extraordinary story of not one, but three, narrow escapes.

It was the seventh of June, nineteen-forty, just after the evacuation of Dunkirk. The Eighth Battalion, The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, had been part of the rear guard. Private William Kemp, Corporal Alastair MacDonald and Lance-Corporal James 'Ginger' Wilson, together with the remnants of C Company, were captured by Nazi troops. They were all to be marched into Germany, but the trio managed to escape. At first, travelling only by night, they managed to bluff their way by pretending to be Frenchmen. But one afternoon they were caught by German soldiers and taken to their camp.

There, they were questioned. But when Kemp was asked his nationality, he replied in his native Gaelic 'I don't know'. Asked where they came from, he said 'Ardnamurchan'. Puzzled, the camp interpreters produced an atlas, and Kemp pointed to the Ukraine. The trio were released, as Russia was not yet at war with Germany.

Near Bayonne, they were betrayed, and put in a civilian prison. This time, they claimed to be Irish Americans and sang Gaelic songs. They were released the following morning.

After several attempts, they succeeded in crossing the Spanish frontier in July, where the British consulate arranged for them to be collected by a warship outside Spanish waters. They arrived safely in Gourock on the twenty-eighth of July.

## **STOP 47. PALACE EXTERIOR**

### **Male Narrator:**

This is Stirling Castle Palace, one of the most wonderful buildings in Scotland.

If you look up towards the left hand corner, you can see the man who commissioned it; King James the Fifth. He's wearing a bonnet, holding a dagger and stroking his long beard. Above him is a lion, clutching a tablet bearing the initials 'I five', which stand for Iacobus the Fifth; Iacobus being Latin for James.

The palace was built as a residence for James and his new Queen, the French noblewoman Marie de Guise. She was his second wife. His first, Madeleine, the daughter of the king of France, had died only a few months into their marriage.

Like Princess Madeleine, Mary of Guise was a real catch. The English king, Henry the Eighth, had also vied for both their hands, but to his mortification, the Scottish king had prevailed.

So here at Stirling, James built a residence fit for a European Queen. And Mary brought skilled artisans with her from France: carvers, masons, painters and musicians.

To hear more about the sculptures that decorate the palace, press the green button.

(XX 470 – Palace Exterior Continued)

## **STOP 470. PALACE EXTERIOR CONTINUED**

### **Female Narrator:**

The palace façade is decorated with all sorts of fantastical creatures.

If you look at the statue of King James, just above it and to the right there's something that looks like a sheep, or a goat.

And in the next bay along, could those be monkeys?

And in the next parrots.

There's a whole bestiary of real and imagined animals.

Of course, the ruler of the animal kingdom is the lion, and James the Fifth's heraldic symbol was the lion rampant. So it's no surprise that you can find an entire pride of lions here. If you look up towards the roof, you'll see them on the waterspouts.

But it wouldn't be a Renaissance Palace without Greek and Roman gods. If you look back to King James, to the right of him, is the figure of a young man, standing on a tall column. This is Ganymede, the beautiful youth who was cup-bearer to the gods. He symbolised the eternal youth of James' new golden age.

The next figure to the right, holds a globe in her right hand and a dart in her left. This means she is probably Venus Armata, a Venus who has triumphed over Mars (the god of war) whose weapons she now uses as playthings.

Immediately to her right is a bearded man, clutching a purse that hangs from a ribbon around his neck. This is Saturn, the god of justice and plenty.

The final figure in the series is a representation of Abundance, showering visitors to the palace with the fruits of James' reign.

The message was clear to the learned visitor: James was a legitimate and virtuous ruler whose reign would bring peace and prosperity to all.

## **STOP 48. LION'S DEN**

### **Male Narrator:**

This small courtyard lies at the centre of James the Fifth's royal palace. It's known as the Lion's Den, because it's thought that he may have kept a lion here, a present from Flanders in fifteen-thirty-seven.

European kings often gave lions as diplomatic gifts. James the Second had one and James the Sixth had three!

Occasionally, they may have been incorporated into court spectacles. It is said that James the Sixth planned to involve a lion in Prince Henry's baptism pageant, to draw the little carriage carrying the infant prince. Thankfully, according to an early nineteenth century source, these plans were abandoned in case 'his presence brought fear to the ladies'!

## **STOP 49. NETHER BAILEY & POWDER MAGAZINES**

### **Female Narrator:**

This area is known as the Nether Bailey; nether meaning 'below' and bailey coming from the old French word for an enclosed courtyard. It's thought to be one of the oldest parts of Stirling Castle, part of the early earthwork fortification.

It's a tranquil spot today, but in medieval times it would have been alive with activity.

Cannons were stored and repaired here and there was a range of workshops and stores. It was also the location of the kennels of James the Fifth's beloved hounds.

The buildings to the left are the powder magazines, built in the early nineteenth century. They're surrounded by a high wall; designed to contain an explosion.

Today, the nether bailey houses the tapestry studios, where the famous Stirling Unicorn Tapestries are being painstakingly rewoven. You're welcome to go and watch the weavers work. They're just a little farther down.

While you're here, you may also like to enjoy the fantastic views from the wall walk.

## **STOP 50. TAPESTRY STUDIO**

### **Male Narrator:**

This is the Tapestry Studio, where a team of talented weavers is recreating the Unicorn tapestries, a highlight of the newly refurbished Palace interiors.

If the studio is open, you're welcome to go in and watch the weavers work, but please, don't disturb them. It takes an expert weaver an entire day to make just one square inch; a whole tapestry takes between two and four years to complete.

The seven tapestries being woven here at Stirling are based on a set from the Metropolitan Museum in New York. They tell the story of the Hunt of the Unicorn; a magical creature, highly prized for its purifying horn.

*SFX: Gentle fade up sounds of medieval hunt getting under way, then sound of horse rearing, hooves through water, some sense of maidenly wiles*

The Lord and his huntsmen set out with greyhounds and scent hounds and succeed in running the unicorn to ground. They beset it

with dogs and spears, but the unicorn puts up a staunch fight with its horn and hooves, and escapes by leaping a stream. It's clear that brute force can't take it, so the huntsmen employ cunning instead. Enter the maiden, who tames the unicorn, allowing it to be captured and killed. In the final tapestry, the unicorn lives again, docile and tethered within a pen.

Many layers of meaning were woven into the fabric of the tapestries. The unicorn may stand for Christ, made mortal by the maiden; the Virgin Mary. The hunt might also symbolise the pursuit of courtly love, culminating in the capture of a bridegroom! Unicorn tapestries were a fitting wedding gift.

We know that James the Fifth and Mary of Guise owned two sets of Unicorn tapestries, made in the Low Countries. Each would have cost about as much as a new warship, so when the household moved, they would have been carefully rolled up and taken to the new location.