

Mary, Queen of Scots to get first statue

Her life was full of murder and intrigue and she is famous across the globe. But there has never been a public statue of Mary, Queen of Scots in the country of her birth.



Mary, Queen of Scots (8 December 1542 – 8 February 1587), also known as Mary Stuart or Mary I of Scotland, was Queen of Scotland from 14 December 1542 to 24 July 1567 and Queen consort of France from 10 July 1559 to 5 December 1560.

Mary, the only surviving legitimate child of King James V of Scotland, was six days old when her father died and she acceded to the throne. She spent most of her childhood in France while Scotland was ruled by regents, and in 1558, she married the Dauphin of France, Francis. He ascended the French throne as King Francis II in 1559, and Mary briefly became queen consort of France, until his death in December 1560. Widowed, Mary returned to Scotland, arriving in Leith on 19 August 1561. Four years later, she married her first cousin, Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley, but their union was unhappy. In February 1567, his residence was destroyed by an explosion, and Darnley was found murdered in the garden.

James Hepburn, 4th Earl of Bothwell, was generally believed to have orchestrated Darnley's death, but he was acquitted of the charge in April 1567, and the following month he married Mary. Following an uprising against the couple, Mary was imprisoned in Loch Leven Castle. On 24 July 1567, she was forced to abdicate in favor of James, her one-year-old son by Darnley. After an unsuccessful attempt to regain the throne, she fled southwards seeking the protection of her first cousin once removed, Queen Elizabeth I of England. Mary had previously claimed Elizabeth's throne as her own and was considered the legitimate sovereign of England by many English Catholics, including participants in a rebellion known as the Rising of the North. Perceiving her as a threat, Elizabeth had her confined in various castles and manor houses in the interior of England. After eighteen and a half years in custody, Mary was found guilty of plotting to assassinate Elizabeth, and was subsequently executed.

Now, more than 400 years after her death, the monarch, whose son, James, became king of Scotland and England, is finally to have a monument to her erected in Scotland.



The statue will be unveiled later this spring but work is under way at Powderhall foundry in Edinburgh on a queen who has been notable by her absence. David Annand is the sculptor working on the statue.



The statue will be 7ft tall and made of bronze. Its new home will be at Linlithgow palace, where Mary was born in 1542. According to Dr. David Mitchell, who is Historic Scotland's director of conservation, this location seemed to be "entirely appropriate."