

# Three Barclays Who Never Were

By Tim Barclay, Barclay Historian

Among the early lairds of Gartly named in *A History of the Barclay Family* are Sir John, Sir Walter, and Andrew de Berkeley, supposedly grandfather, father, and son.<sup>1</sup> However, no such men existed, their identities resulting from confusion and editorial errors.

Sir John de Berkeley is numbered in the *History* as the seventh laird of Gartly and reported as having signed the Ragman Rolls with his kinsmen on 14 March 1295-6. The reference for this statement is the *Calendar of Documents Relating to Scotland* which indeed faithfully records the submissions of Sir John, Sir David, and Walter de Berkeley on 14 March.<sup>2</sup> However, no year was included in the original record of these submissions and, while the editors of the *Calendar* believed it to be 1295-6 (indicated by the placement of this suggestion in square parentheses), this is now widely recognised as an impossible date. Instead, these submissions were made during the invasion of Scotland in 1303-4. Moreover, the Sir John de Berkeley named therein was obviously the son of Patrick de Berkeley, thane of [Belhelvie](#), who inherited from his father the Barclay moiety of [Crawfordjohn](#) in Lanarkshire.

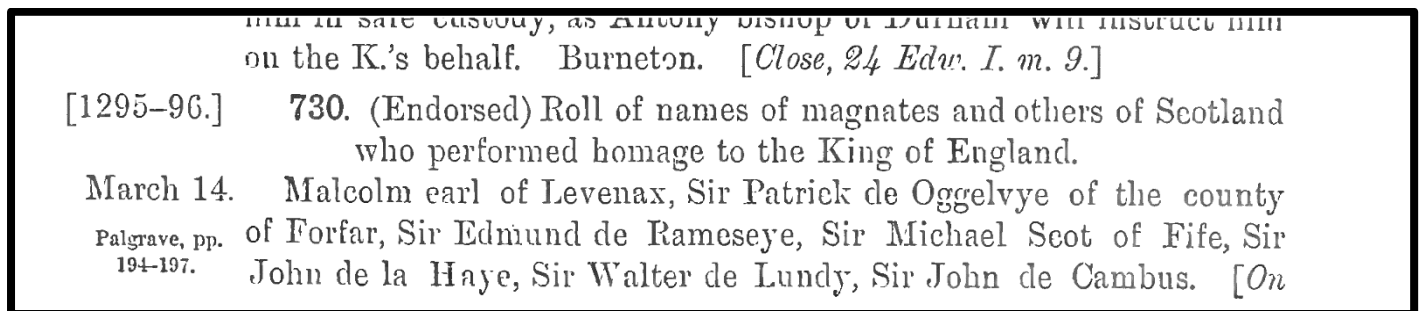


Figure One: Extract from *Calendar of Documents Relating to Scotland, Volume II, no.730*. Note the date provided editorially, [1295-6], is erroneous.

Sir Walter de Berkeley is said in the *History* to have signed the Ragman Rolls at the same time as his supposed father, Sir John, on 14 March [1295-6] and to have also made his submission at Berwick-upon-Tweed on 28 August the same year. The errors with the first of these submissions are now apparent. An additional error occurs with the second submission though, for the Sir Walter de Berkeley "of the county of Edinburgh" recorded therein was the same individual who was earlier captured at Dunbar with the Comyns and was then imprisoned in Berkhamsted Castle.<sup>3</sup> Walter

continued as a Comyn supporter and was nominated in the Ordinances in September 1305 to serve the English king as sheriff of [Banff](#), but he became a supporter of Robert the Bruce by mid-1306.<sup>4</sup> In the late 1310s, Walter became the last thane of [Belhelvie](#) and was then sheriff of [Aberdeen](#) by the early 1320s. Walter also received a royal charter of the lands of [Towie](#), on the north bank of the Ythan in the earldom of Buchan, around this time.<sup>5</sup>

Andrew de Berkeley (supposedly the ninth laird of Gartly) is said to have been captured, convicted of treason, and executed in northern England in 1322-3. The reference for this statement is given as the *Scotichronicon* and, enclosed therein, is an editorial notation directing the reader to substitute "Berclay" for the name as recorded by Fordun.<sup>6</sup> However, this correction is itself erroneous, and the passage clearly relates to Andrew de Harcla (or Harclay), earl of Carlisle, who left King Edward II's allegiance in disgust after his royal retreat from Byland. On 3 January 1322-3 Harcla had a private interview with the Bruce at Lochmaben and, upon his return to Carlisle, informed the leaders of Cumberland, exhausted by continued Scottish raids, of his treaty with the king of Scots. However, Harcla was captured by the English king's agents at Carlisle on 25 February and, on 3 March, was dragged to the gallows at Henriby and there hanged, drawn, and quartered.

**dum pecuniâ redempti : sicque rex Scotiæ cum suis lætâ potiti victoriâ, ingenti cum gaudio et honore ad propria redierunt. Eodem anno, primo die mensis Octobris, Andreas de Herclay \* capitur, et de proditiōe convictus capite punitur.**

\*Berclay, edit. H. Erclay, alii codd.

Figure Two: Extract from the *Scotichronicon* concerning Andrew de Harcla.

<sup>1</sup> Hubert F. Barclay, comp., *A History of the Barclay Family (HOTBF), II* (London: St Catherine Press, 1933), pp.97-100.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Bain, ed., *Calendar of Documents Relating to Scotland, II* (Edinburgh: H.M. General Register House, 1884), no.730.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, nos.742, 823, 875.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, no.961; Francis Palgrave, ed., *Documents and Records Illustrating the History of Scotland, I* (London: Record Commission, 1837), no.142(87).

<sup>5</sup> John Maitland Thomson, ed., *Registrum Magni Sigilli Regum Scottorum, I* (Edinburgh: H.M. General Register House, 1882), app.1, no.69, app.2, nos.42, 411.

<sup>6</sup> John de Fordun and Walter Bower, *Scotichronicon, cum Supplementis et Continuatione Walteri Boweri E Codicibus Mss. Editum, cum notis et variantibus lectionibus, II* (Edinburgh: Robert Fleming, 1759), pp.278-9.