

Dirleton Castle – Murder Treason & Plot

☒ Aspects of life in 16th century Scotland come under the spotlight in a colourful event at Dirleton Castle this weekend.

From the political plotting and royal scandals of the period, to the weaponry, crafts, pastimes and fashions of the mid-1500s, the event on Sunday 8th August provides a fascinating insight into this pivotal era in our country's history.

From 12 noon to 4.00pm, visitors to Dirleton will be treated to a lively and varied programme of 16th-century themed entertainment from a cast of talented costumed performers.

Amongst other characters, they'll meet Lord Patrick Ruthven and William Douglas, Earl of Morton – two of the culprits behind one of the most famous and shocking incidents of the period – the murder of David Rizzio, private secretary to Mary, Queen of Scots.

Treasonous scheming involving Ruthven and Morton led to Rizzio's violent death in 1566 in the presence of the heavily pregnant Mary. And at Dirleton they'll be sharing the secret of why they wanted the young queen's Italian aide dead.

Rizzio's influence over Mary – and the fact that he was an ambitious Catholic and a foreigner to boot – made him unpopular with Protestant nobles who started rumours that the queen was having an adulterous affair with him and may even have been carrying his child. Already jealous of the relationship, Mary's husband, Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley was incensed by the suggestions and joined a conspiracy, led by Ruthven, to murder Rizzio.

The treasonous plot and particularly violent murder of Rizzio in front of Mary was part of a wider campaign by Scots nobles and Elizabeth I to destabilise the Scottish queen. The catalyst for the downfall of Darnley, the incident had serious consequences for Mary, so was tremendously important in history.

Nick Finnigan, Historic Scotland Events Manager, said: "We hope visitors to Dirleton Castle on Sunday 8th August will not only enjoy hearing Ruthven and Morton talking about their audacious murder plot, but will also be entertained by the rest of our varied 16th-century themed programme.

"There's something for everyone at our 'Murder Treason & Plot' event at Dirleton – including a chance to learn about the weaponry of the 16th century, the fashions and pastimes, or visit a military encampment and watch thrilling combat shows."

'Murder Treason & Plot' is included in the normal admission price to Dirleton Castle – £4.70 for adults, £2.80 for children and £3.80 for concessions.
[googleMap name="Dirleton Castle" width="400" height="400" directions_from="true"]Dirleton Castle East Lothian[/googleMap]