

# Walter fitz Alan

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**Walter FitzAllan** (1106 – June 1177) was the 1st Hereditary High Steward of Scotland (ca. 1150-1177), and described as “a Norman by culture and by blood a Breton“.<sup>[1]</sup> He was the third son of a Breton knight, Alan fitz Flaad, feudal lord of Oswestry, by his spouse Aveline, daughter of Ernoulf de Hesdin.<sup>[2][3]</sup>



19th century depictions of the seal and counter-seal of Walter, circa 1170.

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## Life

When The Anarchy took hold in England and civil war between Empress Matilda and Stephen, Walter rallied to the support of the Empress.<sup>[4]</sup>

When Empress Matilda’s cause was lost, Walter befriended David I who was an uncle of Matilda. He became David’s *dapifer* or Steward. Accompanied by his brother Simon,<sup>[5]</sup> Walter came to Scotland about 1136 <sup>[6]</sup> and fought for Scotland at the Battle of the Standard at Northallerton in 1138 under the command of David I’s son, Prince Henry.

Subsequently he was appointed Steward of Scotland by King David I; in 1157 the appointment as Steward was confirmed as a hereditary office. In return for the service of five knights, David also granted him <sup>[7]</sup> what eventually comprised Renfrewshire: the lands of Paisley, Pollok, Cathcart, and Ayrshire; this grant was reconfirmed in a charter in 1157 from Malcolm IV. In 1163 Walter founded, first at Renfrew but shortly afterwards at Paisley, a house of monks of the Cluniac order drawn from the priory of Much Wenlock, in his native county of Shropshire.<sup>[8]</sup> Walter acquired directly from the Crown the Berwickshire estates of Birkenside and Legerwood on the eastern or left bank of the Leader Water<sup>[9]</sup> and presented to the monks the church of Legerwood, which they held from 1164 until the Reformation in 1560.<sup>[10]</sup> The monastery steadily grew and by 1219 became Paisley Abbey.

In 1164 he led a force which defeated Somerled, King of the Hebrides (Gaelic: *rí Innse Gall*) in the Battle of Renfrew.

## Marriage and issue

Walter fitz Alan was married to Eschyna de Londoniis, heiress of Uchtred de Molla (Molle) & Huntlaw (territorial designations, not then surnames) <sup>[11][12]</sup> and widow of Robert Croc. Upon Walter's death his widow married Henry de Molle,<sup>[12]</sup> whose new surname is probably taken from his wife's lands.

She and Walter had issue:

- Alan fitz Walter, married firstly Eva, allegedly a daughter of Sweyn Thorsson, secondly Alesta, daughter of Morggán, Earl of Mar.
- Walter fitz Walter<sup>[13]</sup>
- Simon fitz Walter
- Margaret fitz Walter,<sup>[13]</sup> married Robert de Montgomery of Eaglesham.
- Christiana fitz Walter, married firstly William de Brus, Lord of Annandale, secondly Patrick, Earl of Dunbar.

## Death

Walter, The Steward, died in 1177 and was interred in the monastery at Paisley, the burying-place of his family before their later accession to the throne.<sup>[14]</sup>

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> ^ Mackenzie, A. M., MA., D.Litt., *The Rise of the Stewarts*, London, 1935, pps.8 -9.
- <sup>2</sup> ^ Round, J. H., *Studies in Peerage*, p.123
- <sup>3</sup> ^ Barrow, G. W. S.; Harrison, B. (2004), *Stewart family (per. c. 1110–c. 1350)* (<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/49411>), Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (online ed.), Oxford University Press, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/8063 (<http://dx.doi.org/10.1093%2Fref%3Aodnb%2F8063>), retrieved 16 Feb 2009
- <sup>4</sup> ^ Ritchie, R. L. Graeme, *The Normans in Scotland*, Edinburgh University Press, 1954, p.281
- <sup>5</sup> ^ Anderson (1867) vol.ix, p.512
- <sup>6</sup> ^ Professor Geoffrey W. S. Barrow, *The Anglo-Norman Era in Scottish History*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1980, ISBN 0-19-822473-7 page 64-5, where it is stated that Walter son of Alan came to Scotland about 1136 and served as “dapifer” or Steward successively to kings David I, Malcolm IV, and William the Lion.
- <sup>7</sup> ^ Ritchie, R. L. Graeme, *The Normans in Scotland*, Edinburgh University Press, 1954, p.280
- <sup>8</sup> ^ Burke, Messrs., John and John Bernard, *The Royal Families of England, Scotland, and Wales &c.*, volume 2, London, 1851, p. xl.
- <sup>9</sup> ^ Professor Geoffrey W. S. Barrow, *The Anglo-Norman Era in Scottish History*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1980, ISBN 0-19-822473-7 page 65
- <sup>10</sup> ^ Binnie, Dr.G.A.C., *The Churches and Graveyards of Berwickshire*, Berwick-upon-Tweed, 1995, p.344, ISBN 0-9526805-0-5
- <sup>11</sup> ^ Simpson (1713); Burke, Messrs., John and John Bernard, *The Royal Families of England, Scotland, and Wales, &c.*, volume 2, London, 1851, p.xl; Mackenzie, A. M., MA., D.Litt., *The Rise of the Stewarts*, London, 1935, pps.8 -9.
- <sup>12</sup> ^ <sup>a</sup> <sup>b</sup> Ritchie (1954) p.281
- <sup>13</sup> ^ <sup>a</sup> <sup>b</sup> Simpson (1713).
- <sup>14</sup> ^ Anderson, William,*The Scottish Nation*, Edinburgh, 1867, vol.ix, p.512

Preceded by <b>none</b>	<b>High Steward of Scotland</b> ca. 1150 – ca. 1177	Succeeded by <b>Alan Fitzwalter</b>
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