

## Duns History Society Lecture 28<sup>th</sup> January - Andrew Nairn - Trail of Blood

The Dunse History Society was entertained to an excellent talk 'Antoine de la Bastie; the Trail of Blood 'given by Andrew Nairn on 28 January. A real life murder played out right here in the Duns area. Antoine was born in 1480 in Lissieu France, a charming handsome man who became very skilled at jousting. About 1500 he travels to Paris where his jousting skills capture the attention of then Queen who takes him on and made him The White Knight. Jousting tournaments were held all over and in 1503 he visits Scotland for the royal wedding of Margaret Tudor to James IV of Scotland. He went to Cockburnspath,, Dunbar and then Dalkeith. In 1506 he was invited back as a royal guest and became well in with the royal family. Returning to France he fights in the war with Italy and became a war hero. In 1513 the Scots lost at the battle of Flodden and most of the Scottish aristocracy was wiped out. Margaret became the regent for her young son and then marries the Earl of Angus and they form ' The English Party'. 'The French Party' supported the exiled Duke of Albany Antoine helps Albany secure power in 1515 and becomes Albany's deputy based in Dunbar castle. Margaret, who is Queen of Scotland and sister of Henry VIII flees to England via Berwick and Coldstream. Albany then establishes order and returns to France and Antoine is left to safeguard the infant king. By 1517 Antoine is the most important person in Scotland and was made Warden of the Marshes. The Home/Hume families, important Border landowners are furious at the prospect of some Frenchman taking their jobs and start plotting to remove him. He is lured to Langton and then at Broomhouse he is murdered and beheaded and the head tied to a horse. As a permanent friend of the King of France this is seen as an international incident but little is done and all that remains is his skull and his body which was buried at Broomhouse. Jean Hume orders his body to be burned in 1810 at Wedderburn Castle. David Hume of Wedderburn was the culprit. In 1975 a monument is erected by a descendant of the Humes. In 2025 The Duns Players presented a show of these events and Andrew Nairn has published two novels based on these events.