

Ballathie | COUNTRY HOUSE HOTEL & ESTATE



The History

Ballathie House is not only one of Scotland's finest country house hotels but also a place steeped in rich history. Located in East Perthshire, an area with a deep and storied past, Ballathie has been a significant landmark for centuries.

Early History and Roman Influence

The region has been a site of settlement and strategic importance for millennia. The Romans passed through in the 1st century AD, fortifying Kinclaven at the confluence of the River Isla and the River Tay. By 83 AD, local inhabitants likely observed the legendary Battle of Mons Graupius from Court Hill, which stands on the northern high ground of the Ballathie Estate. The Haugh of Kercock, part of what is known as "The Bloody Inches," was the site of a fierce battle between the Caledonians and the Danes.

Medieval Period: Kinclaven Castle and William Wallace

In 1235, Alexander II built Kinclaven Castle, a strategic stronghold that played a pivotal role in Scotland's turbulent history. In 1297, William Wallace and his men ambushed an English force, trapping them inside the castle before burning it down. Today, the castle's ruins remain visible within the undergrowth, a silent reminder of Scotland's resistance.

The Drummonds and the Building of Ballathie House

During the 17th century, the Ballathie lands were owned by the Drummond family, Earls of Perth. Later, the estate was sold to the forebears of General Richardson Robertson of Tullybelton, who commissioned the construction of the present-day Ballathie House. Though the initials on the building's rainwater goods still bear his mark, he sadly passed away in 1883, three years before its completion. His nephew, Colonel Edmund Robert F. Richardson, later oversaw the construction of Kinclaven Bridge (1903–1905), located near the world-renowned Meikleour Beech Hedge, the tallest beech hedge in the world.

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The Coates Family: Growth and Development

In 1910, Ballathie House was purchased by Sir Stewart Coates of Paisley, winning out in a bid against an American millionaire. The estate quickly became famous for its exceptional autumn salmon fishing. Under Sir Stewart's ownership, the house underwent significant upgrades, including alterations to the servants' quarters, the installation of central heating and electric lighting, and the construction of a new entrance porch.

After World War I, an army hut was repurposed as a dance hall for estate staff and locals. Golf also became a major attraction, with a 9-hole course designed by renowned golfer Ben Sawers. However, this course was later ploughed up during World War II as part of the national food production effort.

Notable Guests and Royal Connections

Ballathie House has welcomed many distinguished guests, including Grand Duke Michael of Russia, Sir John Wolfe Barry (designer of London's Tower Bridge), and the Bishop of London. The Prince of Wales (later Edward VIII) and the Duke of Westminster also visited, though the latter found it not quite grand enough for his taste!

The Hardie Family and Modernization

In 1936, Colonel Stephen Hardie, a Glasgow-based accountant and a founding member of the British Oxygen Company, acquired Ballathie. He introduced extensive internal modifications, including the internal telephone system, which remains visible today. Following his passing in 1969, his estate was auctioned, with furniture and collectables estimated to raise £30,000–£40,000.

Ballathie's Transformation into a Hotel

The estate changed hands once more in 1970 when it was purchased by the Maxwell family, who converted the house into a hotel in 1972. The transformation was executed with great care, preserving the elegance and grandeur of the original country house. In December of 2024 the hotel was purchased by IMR hotels.

A Vision for the Future

When complete, The Ballathie House Hotel & Estate will emerge as a premier destination for field sports, fishing, and wellness, blending traditional outdoor pursuits with modern luxury and sustainability. Guests will enjoy unparalleled experiences, from expertly guided expeditions to indulgent spa treatments, all set against the breathtaking backdrop of Perthshire's rolling hills and pristine waters.

With this strategic investment, the plans are to elevate the hotel culinary offerings further, introducing innovative menus, and an enhanced dining experience that aligns with the property's heritage of excellence. Guests can look forward to new culinary concepts while continuing to enjoy the signature dishes and flavour's that have made The Ballathie House Hotel & Estate a beloved destination.

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A Commitment to Sustainability and Community

Our renovations will prioritise sustainable practices, preserving the estate's natural beauty while reducing our environmental footprint. We are also dedicated to deepening our partnership with the local community, collaborating with suppliers, artisans, and organisations to showcase the best of Perthshire's culture and resources.