

SOCIAL STUDIES — SCOTTISH HISTORY · P5–P7

Màiri Bànrìgh na h-Alba — Mary Queen of Scots

Knowledge Organiser — P5–P7

Mary's life — key events

1

Early life

Born December 1542. Queen of Scotland at six days old. Sent to France aged 5 for safety. Married the French Dauphin (future Francis II) in 1558. Became Queen of France briefly (1559-60). Returned to Scotland 1561 as a widow.

2

Mary's Scotland

Mary returned to a Scotland transformed by the Protestant Reformation (John Knox). She was Catholic; most of her subjects were now Protestant. This tension defined her reign.

3

Marriage to Darnley

Mary married her cousin Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley, in 1565. The marriage was disastrous. Darnley was murdered (blown up at Kirk o' Field, Edinburgh) in February 1567.

4

The Bothwell scandal

Mary married the Earl of Bothwell — widely suspected of murdering Darnley — just three months after the murder. This outraged Scottish Protestant lords, who imprisoned her in Loch Leven Castle.

5

Abdication and flight

Mary was forced to abdicate in favour of her son (James VI) in 1567. Escaped from Loch Leven 1568. Her army was defeated at Langside. She fled to England — seeking Elizabeth I's protection.



6

Captivity and execution

Mary spent 18 years as Elizabeth I's prisoner. Repeatedly implicated in Catholic plots to overthrow Elizabeth. Executed at Fotheringhay Castle, 8 February 1587, aged 44.

