

Philipburn House Hotel - History

Philipburn House Hotel was originally built in 1751 as the Dower House to Philiphaugh Estate. One of the original beams of the house is above the fireplace in the main lounge, carved with the date of the building.

The house was built by the Strang-Steel family of the Philiphaugh Estate as a family home for the great great grandparents of the current inhabitants of the Estate. They, together with their descendants, lived there until 1845 when the house was let to tenants until 1885. The tenants were a well known local name – Murray, first references to which are found in the History of the Royal Burgh of Selkirk. John Murray, mentioned as the Queen's Herdsman in Ettrick Forrest in 1460, had obtained a charter for Philiphaugh in 1461 and was known as 'Outlaw Murray' who with five hundred of his own men bid defence to the king of Scotland. The Murray's finally gave way and were rewarded by being installed as Sheriff of Ettrick Forest before 1503. Lord George Murray later led a considerable part of Bonnie Prince Charlie's army of 6000 men who left Holyrood Edinburgh on 31st October 1745. Yet another Murray – John Murray of Broughton was secretary to Prince Charles.

The Forest of Ettrick was already famous, for it was here; supported by nobles and clergy that William (Braveheart) Wallace was declared Guardian of the Kingdom of Scotland at the end of the 13th century. Visitors to the area can still visit this ancient site – the abandoned "forest kyrk" (The Kirk of the Forest), the location of the Parish Church of Selkirk until it was abandoned in the mid 1800s.

Sir Fiennes Michael Strang-Steel, current owner of the Philiphaugh Estate, advises that his great grandmother moved back to the house in 1885, and undertook a major restoration, and she and her descendants stayed there until the house was sold to be converted into a hotel in 1972.

On 1st May 1996 a major fire destroyed the rear of half of the original house. Following the rebuilding and refurbishment the hotel reopened in May 1998.

The current owners, Marie and Ian Wells, took over in October 2007.

The Philipburn House Hotel is now established as one of the leading hotels in the Scottish Borders.