



# The Scottish Wars of Independence



# Course Outline

In this unit you will learn about...

- ♦ The Death of King Alexander III
- ♦ The Succession Crisis
- ♦ King Edward's Invasion of Scotland
- ♦ William Wallace and Scottish Resistance
- ♦ Robert the Bruce
- ♦ The Battle of Bannockburn

## King Alexander III

In this section, you will learn...

Who King Alexander III was and why he was a strong King.

How King Alexander III died.

Why his death caused a huge problem in Scotland.

Who was given the throne after Alexander III

How King Edward I of England took control of Scotland.

# King Alexander III

## ***Learning intentions :***

- To understand who King Alexander III was and why he was thought to be a good king.
- To describe the death of King Alexander III.

## **The 'Golden Age' of Scotland 1266-1281**

Alexander III ruled Scotland from the age of 8. He was crowned in 1249 and he had a successful reign as King. Scotland had trouble with Viking invaders from Norway raiding the coast, stealing and killing Scottish people. In 1266, Alexander III signed a peace treaty (an agreement) with the Vikings to stop them from invading Scotland's coasts. This created peace and security for the people living there. They were now safe and secure.

Alexander was also known for dealing fairly with his subjects. Scotland was a 'feudal society'. This meant that the King owned all of the land. However, he divided up care of the land among his barons (or nobles). They rented this land to people to live on and were essentially in charge of certain areas. Barons could be cruel and unfair. King Alexander III controlled the barons well and treated all of his subjects fairly, which made him a very well respected King.

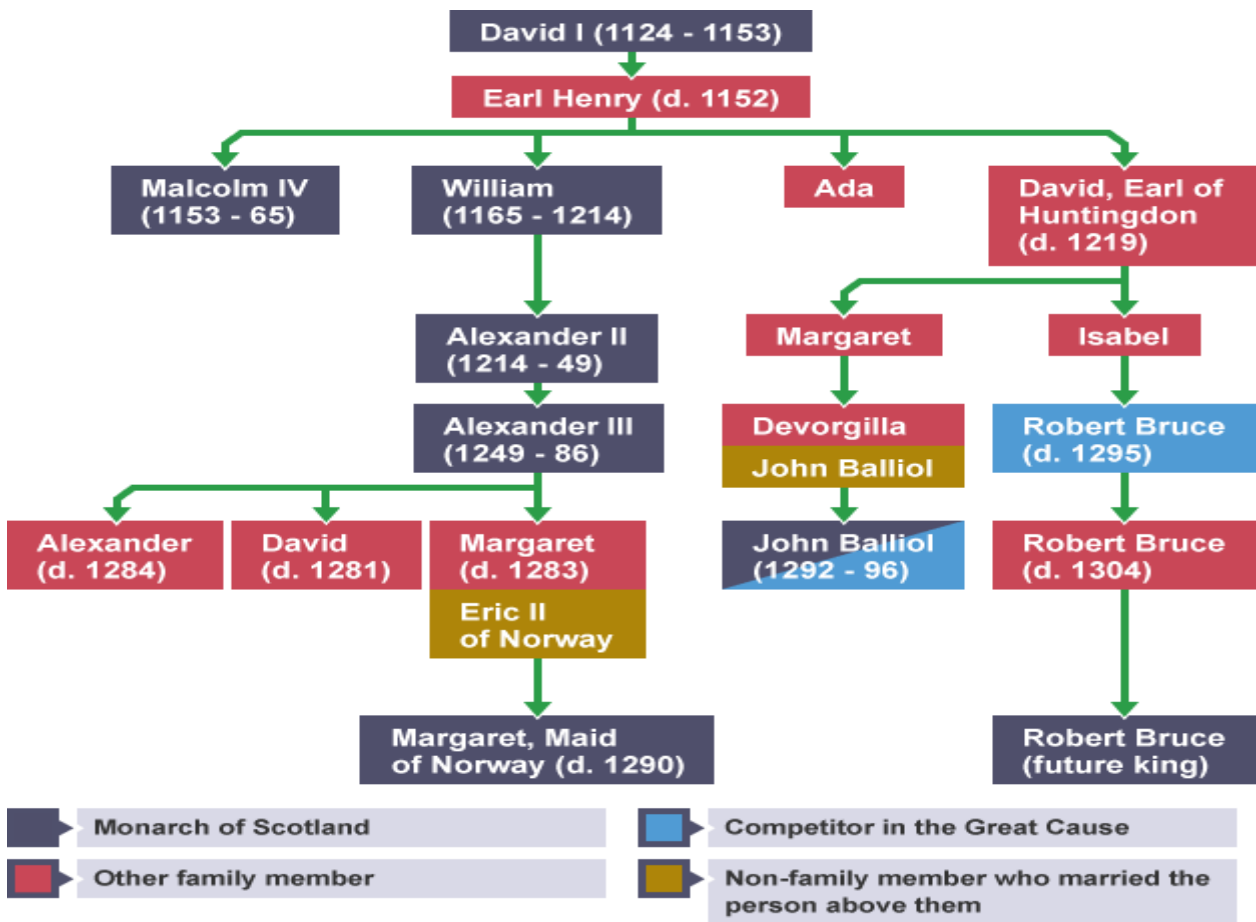
He allowed the peasants (ordinary people) to grow crops and rear animals. Trade grew throughout Scotland while Alexander was King and life was good for many people.

1) Use the information above to write a short paragraph about why Alexander III could be considered a good King.

# King Alexander III's Family Tree

## Learning intentions :

- ◇ To be able to discuss King Alexander's family and lineage
- ◇ To learn how to examine a Family Tree



Copy out and fill in the blanks :

Alexander III is a the Grandson of \_\_\_\_\_

Alexander III had \_\_\_\_\_ children

All of his children \_\_\_\_\_.

His granddaughter was \_\_\_\_\_.

She lived in \_\_\_\_\_.

**Extension :** Draw your own family tree—include as many family members as you can

# The Death of King Alexander III

## Learning intentions :

- ◇ To be able to describe King Alexander III's death
- ◇ To explain why this was such a problem for Scotland

King Alexander III was travelling from **Edinburgh to Kinghorn** after having a meeting with his council. His new wife **Yolande** was waiting for him in Kinghorn so he wanted to get home and see her. The night was very **stormy** and his guides warned him not to ride. Alexander did not listen and set off anyway. When he reached the river Forth, he crossed over with his guides. At some point after this, he was **separated from his guides**. They arrived at Kinghorn and realised Alexander was not there. The next morning they went out to find him. He was found lying at the bottom of a **cliff with a broken neck**. The King had died!

**Discussion** : With your partner, look back at Alexander's family tree. Discuss and note down any problems you can see now that the King is dead.

## Task

**Design the front page of a newspaper telling of King Alexander III's death. It should have:**

- ◇ An appropriate headline
- ◇ A detailed article about his death.
- ◇ A section on what might happen now that he is dead
- ◇ A picture

# The Death of Margaret

## Learning intentions :

- ◇ To describe the situation in Scotland when Margaret took the Throne.
- ◇ To explain why her death was such a problem for Scotland.

## Starter Task

- 1) Which Scottish King died in 1286?
- 2) Why was there no heir to the throne?
- 3) Who was chosen to rule Scotland?

## The Maid of Norway

Margaret was too young to rule when she took the throne. As a result, six Guardians were appointed to rule Scotland until she was old enough - 2 bishops and 4 nobles. It was hoped that they would keep stability and peace in the Kingdom.

**Discuss with your partner ;** What problems could arise from Scotland having such a young leader?

## Tension

There were fears that some people would try and take power by force – Robert Bruce (Grandfather of Robert THE Bruce) tried this but failed. There were fears of a **civil war** . There was also a threat to Scotland from the outside. King Edward I of England wanted to unite the two countries. Eventually it was agreed that Margaret should come to Scotland in 1290 to take the throne. Edward also proposed that his son should marry Margaret to bring the two Kingdoms together. The Guardians agreed in return for a guarantee that Scotland would remain independent from England – Treaty of Birgham. However, Margaret died on her way to Scotland. The fear of a civil war was huge now. With no heir to the throne, those who felt they were entitled to rule would be competing with each other and this could lead to fighting in Scotland. Bishop Fraser of St Andrews wrote to Edward asking him to come to Scotland with troops to keep the peace and also to decide who should rule. He agreed, but insisted that he was to be the OVERLORD of Scotland until he made his decision.

## Glossary

*Civil War*— A war between groups of people in the same country.

*Independent*—Free from foreign rule.

*Bishop*—Church leader

*Noble*—Wealthy landowner

*Treaty*—Agreement

# Task

Source A is written by Bishop Fraser of St Andrews to King Edward I of England in 1290

Young Margaret died soon after reaching Orkney. Tensions have been high in the country since the decision for her to take the throne. Bruce has already tried to seize power and others have shown signs of attempting the same. There is fear of a general war and a great slaughter of men. Let your excellency come to the border, to help save the shedding of blood, and choose for King him who of right out to have the succession.

- 1) Why is the author of Source A useful to us in studying the death of Margaret, the Maid of Norway? (2 marks)
- 2) What concerns does Bishop Fraser have about the situation in Scotland? (2 marks)

*Use the source and your own words.*

- 3) What does the source tell us about the relationship between Bishop Fraser and King Edward? (1 mark)

## Extension Task

- ◆ Imagine you are Bishop Fraser.
- ◆ Write a letter to King Edward asking him to come to Scotland to choose the next King.
- ◆ Tell him...
  
- ◆ What has happened to Margaret
- ◆ About the fear of civil war in Scotland
- ◆ Why you want him in particular to pick Scotland's next ruler

# The Succession Crisis

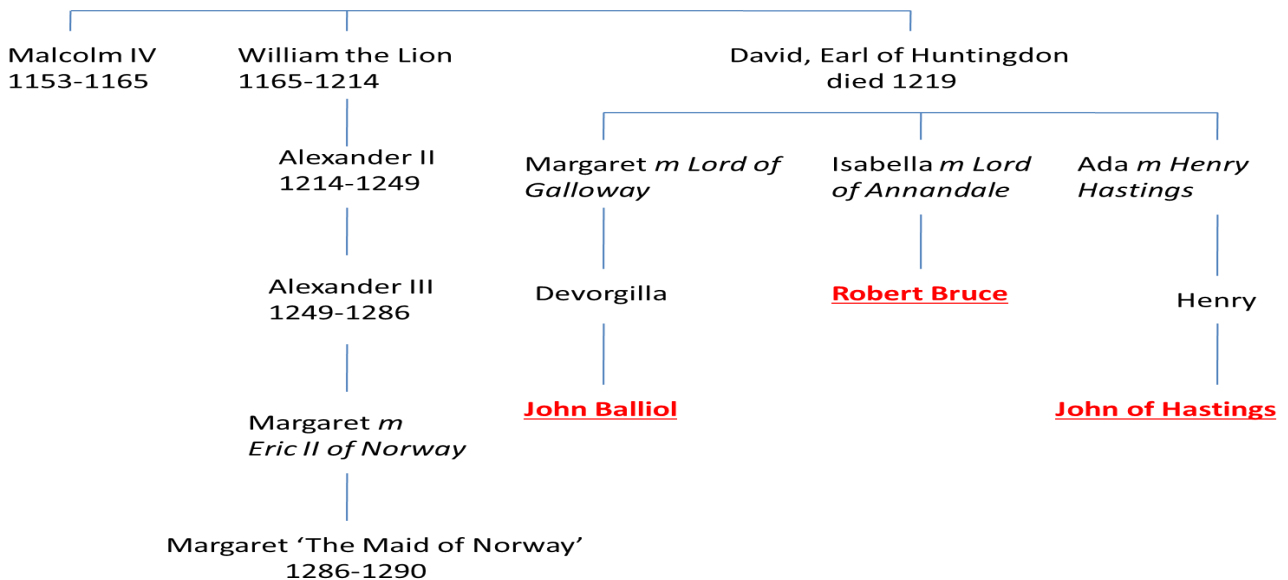
Learning intentions :

To discuss the different claimants to the throne.

To describe the process of choosing the next King of Scotland.

## Choosing the Claimants

King Edward came to Scotland to choose the next King of Scotland. Thirteen nobles put themselves forward however there were three main contenders for the throne...



## Task

You must take the role of King Edward. You have been given information on each competitor on the next page.

With your partner, read the information and gather points about each competitor that make them suitable for the throne.

Then decide who you think should be King.

# Contenders for the Scottish Throne

## John of Hastings

John of Hastings had land in Scotland even though he was an Englishman. By law, he technically had no right to be the King. However, he argued that Scotland was in fact, not a Kingdom in the same sense as England. He therefore proposed that the Kingdom should be divided up into three and given to the direct descendants of David Earl of Huntingdon.

## John Balliol

Balliol was a landholder in Scotland, England and France; this made him a powerful noble with connections in England and France. He was a descendant from the eldest daughter of Earl David. Legitimate inheritance always passed down the eldest line, a practice known as 'Primogeniture'- this means that he was the contender who had the strongest legal claim. His lawyers argued that by letting Margaret take the throne, the other contenders had acknowledged this law and should do so again in the case of Balliol. He claimed that it was not possible to divide Scotland into separate Kingdoms as John of Hastings argued.

## Robert Bruce

Robert Bruce argued that, as he was the oldest of the contenders, he was more closely related to King Alexander. He claimed that this was a better way to decide than the law of 'Primogeniture'. He also claimed that before Alexander had children, he had told Bruce that he wanted him to be King if anything happened to him. However, Alexander then went on to have children, even though they died. Bruce's main bargaining tool was that he had the largest army. He had already tried to take the throne by force and had threatened war again. This meant that in terms of arms and military might, he was the strongest of the competitors.

### Extension Task

Read David Young Textbook pg 9-10 and answer the following questions

1. Name the Six Guardians of Scotland.
2. Explain the reason why these six men were chosen to be Guardians.
3. What job were the Guardians chosen to do?
4. What evidence can you find to suggest that the Guardians were suspicious of Edward?
5. Why did the news about Princess Margaret's death upset:
  - a. The Guardians
  - b. Edward I

# King Edward's Invasion of Scotland

Learning intentions :

- ◆ To explain why John Balliol was considered a weak King.
- ◆ To describe Edward's invasion of Scotland.

**Discuss with your partner :** What characteristics make someone a good King?

## John Balliol as King

John Balliol was crowned King at Scone in 1292. It became clear that King Edward, who had insisted on being named OVERLORD while he chose the King of Scotland, was not going to leave John to rule Scotland freely. John Balliol was made to swear homage to Edward. John always did what Edward asked. The Scottish Barons did not like this and spoke freely about how John should stand up for himself. In 1294 England went to war with France. Edward demanded that Scotland send troops to support his army. The Barons told John to refuse Edward's demands but he did not listen to them. The Barons then took control of the country, placing 12 Guardians in place of John Balliol. They signed a treaty with the French, saying they would send troops to support them against the English. King Edward was furious at this. He decided to teach the Scots a lesson. He invaded Scotland and asserted his authority over the country.

### Questions :

1) Explain the reasons why John Balliol can be considered a weak King. (2 marks)

*John Balliol can be considered to be a weak King because...*

2) Describe what happened when England went to war with France (2 marks)

3) Go to page 44 in the 'Kingdom of Scotland in the Middle Ages' textbook. Write a sentence describing what happened at points 1-9 in the map of Scotland when Edward invaded.

4) Research 'The Ragman Roll'.

# John Balliol Source Work

Learning intentions :

- ◆ To develop my skills of working with sources.

Source A is from a letter written between two Guardians of Scotland

King Balliol has proven himself to be a weak leader. How can one be an effective King while taking orders from another leader? Edward's influence in Scottish affairs is clear for all to see, yet Balliol does nothing to make it clear that he is the true leader of Scotland. Edward has made his intentions known from the start—that he wants to take Scotland for himself. Balliol does not even have the courage to stand up to his own barons who are supposed to be his subjects. We must take action soon if we are to keep Scotland under the control of Scots.

Source B is from a textbook written by a Scottish historian in 2016

The barons had been concerned about Balliol almost from the beginning. Even though he was the rightful King, it appeared that Edward had chosen him as he knew he would be easy to control. John bowed to Edward's demands every time and it made him appear extremely weak to his nobles. Edward must have had this in mind when he chose them. It was no secret that Edward wanted Scotland to become part of his Kingdom. John's weakness was clear even in dealing with his own barons. They openly defied him and John did not seem to do anything about this.

Compare the views of Sources A and B about the reign of John Balliol. (4 marks)

Do the sources agree or disagree with each other?

*Sources A and B agree/disagree about the reign of John Balliol*

What exactly do they agree or disagree about?

*Sources A and B agree/disagree that...*

What evidence do you have to support this?

*Source A states “* \_\_\_\_\_ *” and Source B agrees, stating “*  
*”.* \_\_\_\_\_

## **Section 2 : William Wallace and Scottish Resistance**

In this section you will learn about :

Who William Wallace was.

Why Wallace started fighting against the English.

The Battle of Stirling Bridge.

The Battle of Falkirk.

The capture and execution of William Wallace.

# Who was William Wallace?



Learning intention :

- ◆ To describe the real background of William Wallace

## The Real William Wallace

The popular image of William Wallace is that of 'Braveheart' - the Scottish patriot with a seven foot sword and a blue and white painted face who led the Scots valiantly against the English. While he was the leader of Scottish resistance to King Edward's rule, the myth of Wallace has taken over from the historical facts.

### Task :

Your teacher will show you a documentary about the true story of William Wallace. You must gather as much information as you can about who Wallace was and the true story of his resistance to the English. Focus on :

His family background

Why he started fighting the English

Main battles and victories

# The Battle of Stirling Bridge

## Learning intentions :

To describe the Battle of Stirling Bridge.

To explain the reasons why the Scots were victorious.

## Starter Task

- 1) Who did Wallace murder in 1297?
- 2) Write a few sentences about how you think King Edward of England would react to this?

King Edward decided to send troops to Scotland to deal with the uprising of William Wallace, led by Hugh Cressingham and John De Warenne. Wallace met up with Andrew Murray, who had started fighting the English in the North. Together they planned how best to fight against the English.

The English had a bigger and much better equipped army than the Scots. English cavalry were feared throughout Europe as they were one of the strongest fighting forces of their time. The English also had archers and infantry men. The Scots knew that meeting the English in open battle would be disastrous. Wallace and Murray knew they had to use tactical skills to their advantage.

**Discuss with your partner :** What advantages do you think the Scottish army had?

## Glossary

Cavalry—Knights on horseback

Archers—Soldiers who fired arrows

Infantry—Foot soldiers, usually fighting with a spear or sword.

## Task

- 1) Collect a diagram cut out from your teacher and stick it into your jotter.

Your teacher will then show you a number of labels which describe the battle. However, these are in the wrong order. Write them in the correct order underneath your diagram.

- 2) Explain the reasons why the Scots won the Battle of Stirling Bridge. (2 marks)

*The Scots won the Battle of Stirling Bridge because...*

# The Battle of Stirling Bridge

## Learning intentions :

To discuss different tactics at the Battle of Stirling Bridge.



## Change in tactics

The Scots won the Battle of Stirling Bridge because of their well thought out tactics. However, it was equally because the English tactics were so poorly thought out.

Imagine you are an English commander.

Study the diagram and discuss with your partner how you would approach the battle.

*Remember :*

*Your army—cavalry, archers and infantry—where would you place them and why?*

*Approach— how would you approach the Scots?*

*Landscape— how might the land impact your army?*

# Aftermath of Stirling Bridge

Learning intentions :

To describe what Wallace did after the Battle of Stirling Bridge.

To discuss the reliability of sources.

The English defeat at Stirling Bridge was a great upset and sent shockwaves through Europe. England's cavalry were considered some of the best in the world and it was now clear that in certain circumstances their cavalry could be beaten by infantrymen.

William Wallace and Andrew Moray were crowned Guardians of Scotland in 1297. This was an important title which they gained because of their triumph at Stirling.

Wallace and Moray wrote the Lubeck Letter on 11 October 1297, in which they invited German traders to deal directly with Scottish merchants, following Scotland's victory at the Battle of Stirling Bridge. Following the battle, ports which had been previously under English control came under Scottish authority again. This was a statement of intent from the Scots that they were not under English rule and wanted European countries to recognise this.

Andrew Moray died soon after the battle from injuries he sustained during the fighting. William Wallace continued taking the fight to the English, carrying out several raids on the northern towns of England. This did not beat the English into submission, but certainly caused fear among English soldiers and added to the idea of William Wallace as a terrifying warrior. The raids were particularly brutal, with many innocent men, women and children slaughtered.



This picture is the seal that was on the back of Lubeck Letter.

Historians have interpreted the Latin inscription to read 'William, son of Alan Wallace'. Alan Wallace was a crown tenant in Ayrshire which suggests that William, who was thought to be the son of Malcolm Wallace from Renfrewshire, had a different background than once thought.

## Aftermath of Stirling Bridge Task

- 1) Describe Wallace's actions after the Battle of Stirling Bridge. (3 marks)
- 2) Explain why Wallace could be criticised due to his actions (1 mark)

Source A is written by Walter of Guisborough, and English Chronicler in 1297

Source B is from John of Fordun, a Scottish writer in the 14th century

There was a public robber called William Wallace, who had been outlawed many times because he would not accept Edward as King. This traitor was not a man of skill, but of luck, and was able to narrowly defeat the English army at Stirling. Wallace is a scoundrel, a murderer of women and children, and should not be celebrated.

People who hated the English flocked to Wallace. He was wondrously brave and bold, a skilled warrior who led the Scots to victory at Stirling Bridge. He was a great leader who done what he had to. His raids on the North of England, while brutal, was simply enacted vengeance on the English for their treatment of Scots.

- 3) Compare the views of Sources A and B about William Wallace. (2 marks)

### Extension Task

Imagine you are Wallace. Write your own version of the Lubeck Letter to the leaders of Europe. The purpose of the letter is to inform them of your victory at Stirling Bridge. It should also explain that you are now Guardian of Scotland and inform them that the ports of Scotland are open for trade.

Make it as detailed and informative as you can.

# From Victory to Defeat : The Battle of Falkirk 1298

Learning intentions :

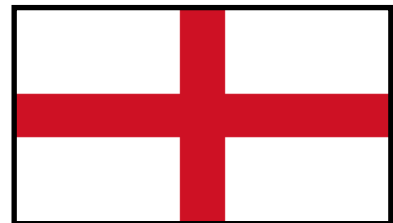
To describe the Battle of Falkirk

King Edward was furious with the defeat at Stirling Bridge. He decided to personally lead his army to Scotland to fight against the Scots and crush them once and for all.



6000 Foot Soldiers

600 Cavalry



12000 Foot soldiers

1500 Knights

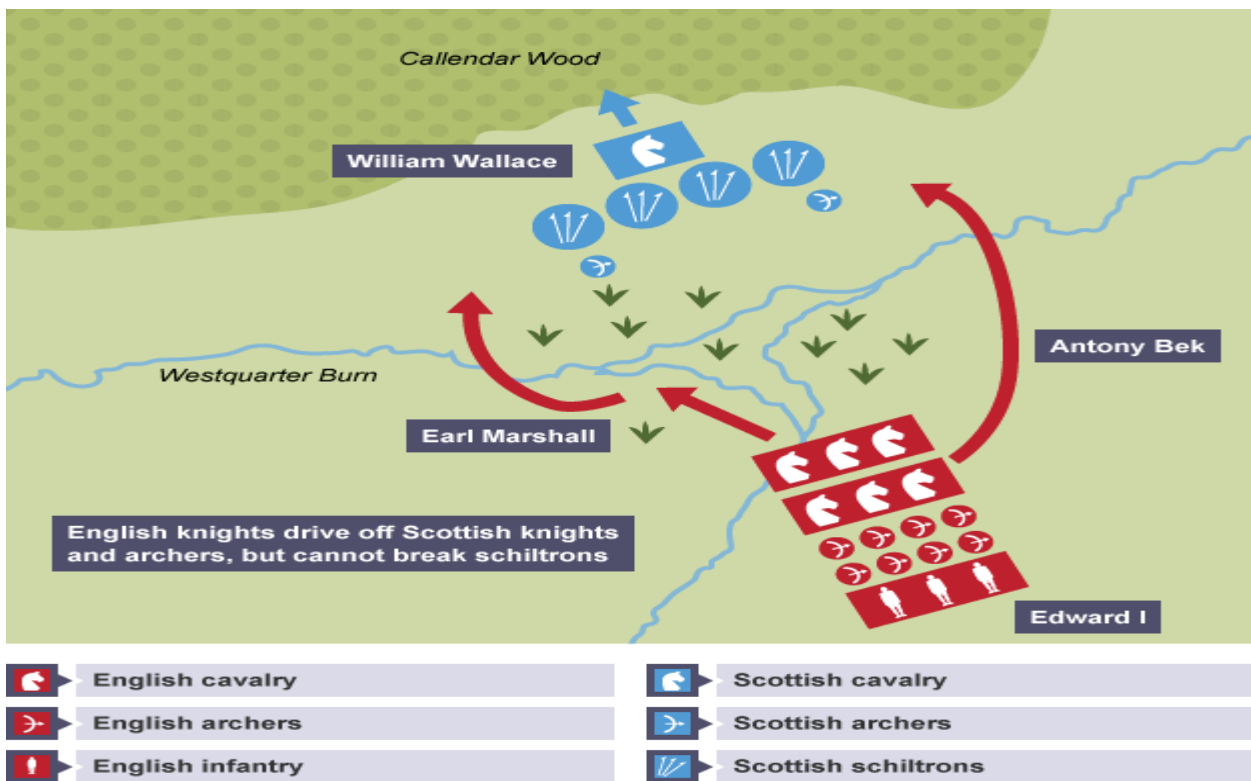
## Tactics

Wallace set his men up in a SCHILTRON formation.

A schiltron is a large circle formation of men. It is several rows deep and made up of hundreds or thousands of men. Each man has a spear pointing outwards

Discuss : What are the advantages and disadvantages of using a SCHILTRON?





### Task

- 1) Describe the Battle of Falkirk (4 marks)
- 2) Explain the reasons why Wallace and the Scots set up in a schiltron formation. (2 marks)
- 3) Explain the reasons why the Scots were defeated at the Battle of Falkirk. (2 marks)

Source A was written by an Scottish infantryman who survived the battle.

We knew our plan beforehand. We had the advantage of knowing the land and setting up in defensive formation against the English horses. We underestimated their archers though. It was the English arrows that saw us undone. When our knights saw the carnage they fled, leaving us no protection at all.

- 1) Why is the author of Source A useful as evidence of the reasons why the Scots were defeated at the Battle of Falkirk?
- 2) What reasons does the author give for why the Scots were defeated? Why is this useful to us?

# The Capture and Execution of William Wallace

## Learning Intentions :

To describe the capture and execution of William Wallace

After the defeat at Falkirk, Wallace resigned as Guardian of Scotland. He is rumoured to have travelled to France to convince John Balliol to return and even met with the Pope to gain support.

Scottish resistance continued after 1298 without Wallace as its leader. Robert the Bruce and John Comyn, two nobles, took Wallace's place as Guardians of Scotland. The two men hated each other and found it difficult to work together. However, Edward learned his lesson and started to treat the Scots more fairly. He gave some of the nobles powerful positions in Scotland and the majority fell in line. They may not have supported Edward, but they obeyed his commands through fear of losing their positions.

When Wallace returned, he was captured by a Scottish knight called Sir John Menteith outside of Glasgow. Scottish sources tell us that Wallace put up a tremendous fight and it took several Englishmen to capture him. English sources tell us that he was captured in the night while he slept with no fuss. Regardless, he was taken to London where he would face Edward for his crimes.

## Task

- 1) Describe Wallace's actions after the Battle of Falkirk. (2 marks)
- 2) What evidence is there that Wallace felt personally responsible for the defeat at Falkirk?
- 3) Explain the reasons why the resistance to Edward diminished after Falkirk. (2 marks)
- 4) Why do you think there is a disagreement between English and Scottish sources?

## Wallace's Execution

Discuss : What process does a criminal go through before they are convicted of a crime?

Wallace was taken to London to stand trial for the crimes that he had committed. He was charged with treason — crimes against the King. The punishment for this is death.

Wallace was not allowed to defend himself at his trial. He tried to argue that he had never accepted King Edward as his King, therefore could not be tried with treason. The court did not accept this and he was executed.

Source A is from Matthew of Westminster, who witnessed Wallace's death.

William Wallace, a man void of pity, a robber given to arson and murder, more hardened in cruelty than Herod, more raging in madness than Nero... was condemned to a most cruel but justly deserved death. He was drawn through the streets of London at the tails of horses, until he reached a gallows... especially prepared for him; there he was suspended on a halter; but taken down while alive, he was mutilated, his bowels torn out and burned in a fire, his head then cut off, his body divided into four, and his quarters transmitted to four principal parts of Scotland

- 1) What makes the source useful or less useful as evidence of Wallace's death?
- 2) Using Source A, describe the execution of William Wallace. (3 marks)

Eg 'Source A says "

". This shows that....

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## William Wallace Role Play

### **King Edward:**

Greetings to my most loyal subjects. You know that I have appointed you as judges to try the case of William Wallace. My instructions are that you read out the list of crimes committed by Wallace against the country and then pass sentence. No reply by Wallace is allowed. I instruct you all to select a day and a place and conduct the trial as I have instructed you.

### **Judge 1:**

After King Edward had taken over Scotland from John Balliol, he made all of the country subject to his royal authority and established his peace through the kingdom. The accused, William Wallace, committed every possible crime and rose in rebellion against the King.

### **Judge 2:**

In defiance of the King's peace, he wounded and the killed William Hazelrigg, who was the Sheriff of Lanark. Thereafter, with all the supporters of his wicked cause, he attacked the castles, cities and towns of Scotland and drove out all the officials appointed by King Edward to rule the country.

### **Judge 3:**

Furthermore, not content with his wickedness, he took some of his supporters and invaded the English counties of Northumberland and Cumberland, killing everyone he found there in various ways. He burned and destroyed holy men dedicated to God and His saints. He spared none who used the English language but slew in the most terrible way men, both young and old, wives, widows, infants and their nurses.

### **Judge 4:**

When King Edward invaded Scotland in the year 1303 and utterly defeated the Scots, Wallace nevertheless persisted in his crimes and refused to give himself up.

### **Judge 5:**

It therefore appears to us unjust and contrary to the laws of England that such a person be allowed to reply and defend his position.

### **THE TRIAL**

On August 23rd, he was brought before a bench of noblemen in Westminster Hall. A long and accurate indictment was read against him detailing all his military victories and the murder of many English prisoners-of-war. He was not allowed to speak, or to defend himself. Wallace did try to speak out at one point. Records show that he yelled out that he admitted all the charges against him except treason. How could he be guilty of high treason if he had never sworn allegiance to the King of England?

## William Wallace Research Project

### Learning Intention :

To research and produce a detailed report/presentation on William Wallace

You have learned about William Wallace and his role in the Scottish resistance to English rule. You must now use this knowledge and learn more about Wallace independently to create a detailed project on his life and death.

Your teacher will decide if you will do an individual written report or a group presentation.

Your report must cover :

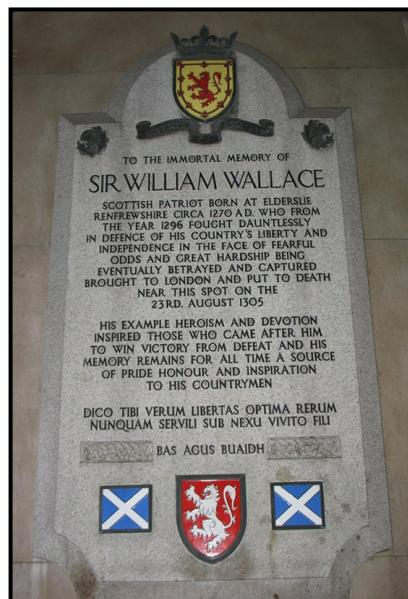
Who William Wallace was : His early life and when and why he started fighting against the English

The Battle of Stirling Bridge—Description of the battle and why Scots won

The Battle of Falkirk—Description of the battle and why Scots lost

His capture, trial and execution.

You must also ensure you have used at least 2 sources—these can be textbooks or websites.



## **Section 3 : Robert the Bruce and the Battle of Bannockburn**

In this section you will learn about :

Early life of Robert the Bruce

The Murder at Greyfriars Church

Robert the Bruce and his Scottish enemies

The Battle of Bannockburn

# Robert the Bruce

Learning intention :

To describe the role of Robert the Bruce.

To explain why the Bruce and Comyn families hated each other.

To describe the murder at Greyfriar's Church.

## Background

Robert the Bruce was grandson of Robert Bruce, who was a competitor for the throne against John Balliol, and was a powerful noble in Scotland. He had several titles, including the Earl of Carrick and Lord of Annandale. He had land in the south of Scotland, England and France. From 1301 onwards, Robert the Bruce had supported King Edward's rule in Scotland.

Discuss : Why do you think one of Scotland's most famous heroes supported King Edward initially?

## Guardian of Scotland

Robert the Bruce was an ambitious man. He believed that the Scots could drive the English out of Scotland if they had a strong leader. Bruce was already in a strong position in Scotland. He was the Guardian of Scotland, along with John Comyn. The Comyns were another noble family in Scotland and were related to John Balliol. The problem was that the Bruce and Comyn families hated each other. Robert the Bruce and John Comyn, despite being joint Guardians, were fierce ri-



## **Task—The Murder at Greyfriars**

*Watch the clip from 'A History of Scotland' and answer the following questions :*

- 1) Where did Robert the Bruce and John Comyn meet?
- 2) Describe what happened at the meeting.
- 3) Explain why this was such a bad thing for Robert the Bruce?
- 4) Describe what Robert the Bruce and the Bishops did after the meeting.

## **Task—Wanted Poster**

Robert the Bruce has committed a terrible crime against God and the King.

Your job is to create a 'Wanted' poster to be put up throughout the country to make sure Robert is caught. On the poster, you must include...

- Info about who Robert the Bruce is—Titles, background, etc.
- His crime—What did he do?
- Why is this such a bad crime?
- A picture of Robert's face.
- Reward
- Any other relevant information

## Robert the Bruce—Patriot or Opportunist?

Robert the Bruce took the position of King for himself. He conformed to King Edward's rule from 1301-1306 but then made himself King, with the support of the Bishops, after killing John Comyn. The Bishops supported Bruce because they had been plotting to put a Scot on the Throne and get rid of English rule in Scotland. Robert the Bruce then took the fight to the English, which we will see in the coming pages.

There is an argument over Robert the Bruce's motivations. Was he a genuine Scottish patriot who wanted to restore Scotland's independence? Or was he a cunning **opportunist**—someone who took advantage of the circumstances in Scotland for his own benefit?

The following sources give evidence about Robert the Bruce becoming King and what he really wanted. Split your page in two with 'Patriot' and 'Opportunist' on either side. You must read the sources and gather as much evidence as you can for each side of the argument. You must then reach a conclusion—your decision about Robert the Bruce based on the evidence you have gathered.



## Robert the Bruce Sources

### Source A

From 1297—1300, Bruce led Scottish resistance in the South to Edward. He had fought against the English and opposed their rule in Scotland. After 1300, he submitted to Edward and seemed to have no choice but to support Edward's rule if he wanted to keep his and titles.

### Source B

The Bruce had planned all along to launch a war against Edward because he wanted to be King. He resented the fact that his family was passed over for the Kingship, which was given to the Balliols during the Succession Crisis. Killing Comyn was a pre-planned move that allowed him to remove his biggest contender to the throne.

### Source C

Bruce was a calculated man driven by selfish desires. He was happy to fight for Scotland when it suited him, but quickly changed sides to support the English when he realised how harsh Edward's punishment on him would be. He never acted in the interest of the Scottish nation, only himself.

### Source D

Bruce understood that opposing Edward would be difficult. After Wallace was executed, King Edward had dealt harshly with people who opposed him. It was unwise for Robert to fight against the English then. However, by 1304 Edward had relaxed his hold in Scotland. Bruce knew that was the best time to try and drive the English out of Scotland which is why he waited before taking the war to the English.

### Source E

It was 6 weeks after the murder of John Comyn that Bruce was crowned King at Scone. He remained in the south of Scotland during those 6 weeks. If he was determined to be King, why did he not go straight to Scone and crown himself King? This suggests that Bruce did not plan to become King from the start.

## Robert the Bruce : The Battle of Methven

### Learning intention :

To be able to describe the Battle of Methven in 1306

### Glossary :

**Legitimacy**— Being accepted by others to be King.

After Robert the Bruce killed John Comyn, a bitter civil war started in Scotland between supporters of the Comyn's and the Bruce. Even though Robert the Bruce crowned himself King, he lacked legitimacy. A force of Comyn supporters and English soldiers made their way to Perth and were met by Robert the Bruce and his army. Bruce followed the rules of warfare and challenged the leader of his opponents, Aymer de Valence, to leave the walls of Perth and meet him in open combat. He refused. Bruce believed this to be a sign of weakness and pitched camp close to Perth without setting up any defences. Valence ambushed Bruce's forces early the next day and defeated them easily. Bruce fled the battlefield and was ambushed again at Dilrigh, where he was very nearly killed. Bruce's force had almost been destroyed. He fled west and hid in caves, mountains and islands off the west coast. His wife and daughter were captured by the English. His brother Neil was caught and executed. Bishops Wishart and Lamberton, who supported Bruce, were taken to England and imprisoned. Bruce's campaign was almost over before it even began.

Discuss : Why do you think Robert the Bruce can be called the 'king in name only'?

### Task

- 1) Create a story board describing the Battle of Methven using the following headings :  
***Valence arrives in Perth, Bruce challenges Valence, Valence ambushes Bruce in the morning, Bruce flees the field, Bruce's family is captured, Bruce seeks refuge at the coast.***
- 2) Explain the reason why Bruce lost the Battle of Methven (1 mark).
- 3) **Internet task** : Look up the story of the spider.

# The Return of Robert the Bruce

Learning intentions :

To describe the Hershship of Buchan.

To describe how Robert the Bruce took back castles in Scotland.

To explain why the Battle of Bannockburn took place.



Robert the Bruce remained off the west coast of Scotland after his disastrous defeat. Legend suggests that the 'story of the spider' renewed his ambitions and he returned to Scotland to fight back against the English. He fought and won against Aymer de Valence at the Battle of Loudon Hill in 1307.

Edward I marched to Scotland in July 1307. Bruce was strangely fortunate, however, as King Edward died on the 7th July as he reached the Scottish border. His son, Edward II, was not like his father. He had little interest in Scotland and did not have the stomach for a war. He turned his troops back and gave the Bruce much needed breathing space to continue his campaign.

Bruce used this opportunity to deal with his Scottish enemies (mainly the Comyns and their supporters) as well as English enemies. He decided to deal with the Comyn family first.

## Video Task

Your teacher will show you a video clip about the Bruce's attack on the Comyns, called the 'Hershship of Buchan'. Note down 5 key facts about the attack.

Once the Bruce had dealt with his Scottish enemies he turned his attention to the English. Castles throughout Scotland were controlled by English soldiers. Controlling castles was the most important factor in medieval warfare. If you controlled a castle, it meant you could control who travelled through Scotland. It provided a place for your army to be stationed, could keep food supplies and also provided defence against potential attackers.

## Task

- 1) Explain the reasons why castles were so important in controlling Scotland. (2 marks)
- 2) Explain the reason why King Edward I's death was a good thing for Robert the Bruce. (1 mark)

# Reclaiming Castles

In 1309, King Robert held his first Parliament and controlled all of Scotland north of the River Tay. This was important as it made more people recognise him as the true King. A King cannot be in full control if they are constantly fighting to prove their name. He was also recognised by the Clergy which gave him more support.

Robert the Bruce learned his lesson after nearly being destroyed by the English. He could not meet them in an open battle. The English had too many men, better equipment and their cavalry were considered one of the best fighting forces in the world of Europe. If he was going to defeat them he would need to change his approach. He started using 'guerrilla tactics' to defeat the English. Over the next three years, he captured castle after castle throughout Scotland. The Bruce destroyed castles as soon as he captured them.

## Glossary

**Guerrilla tactics**—Using ambush, sabotage and hit and run tactics to defeat a larger army.

**Parliament**—Where the King and nobles would meet to discuss the ruling of the country.

**Besiege**—Attacking and surrounding a castle to starve out those inside.

**Discuss** : Why do you think Robert the Bruce destroyed castles once he captured them?

## Task

Your teacher has put information around the room about how the Bruce took back different castles throughout Scotland. Copy and complete the table on the board.

## Stirling Castle

Stirling Castle was the only castle in English control by 1314, however it was the most important. Whoever controlled Stirling effectively controlled Scotland. Known as 'The Gateway to the North', controlling Stirling Castle meant that you could control who travelled through Scotland. Robert the Bruce sent his last remaining brother Edward to besiege the castle and win it off the English. The English commander of the castle, Philip Mowbray, made a deal with Edward Bruce. If the English army did not arrive by midsummers day 1314 to reinforce the castle, they would surrender it to the Scots. Both Robert the Bruce and Edward II were furious about this. It sealed their fate and meant they both had to meet in open battle.

# The Battle of Bannockburn

Learning intentions :

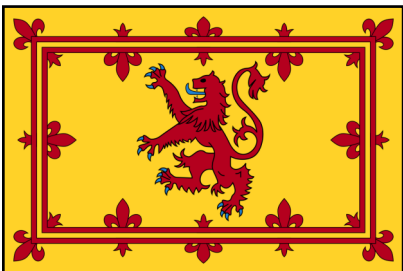
To describe the Battle of Bannockburn

To explain the reasons why the Scots won the Battle of Bannockburn

## Bannockburn Fact File

Date : *23rd and 24th June 1314*

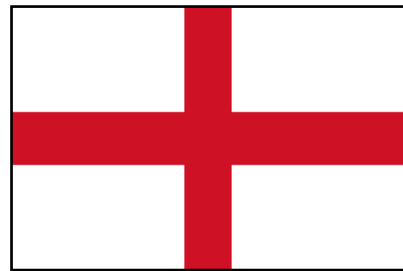
Location : *Bannockburn, outside Stirling Castle*



**Leader** : King Robert the Bruce

**Commanders** : Edward Bruce,  
Sir Thomas Randolph, James  
'The Black' Douglas

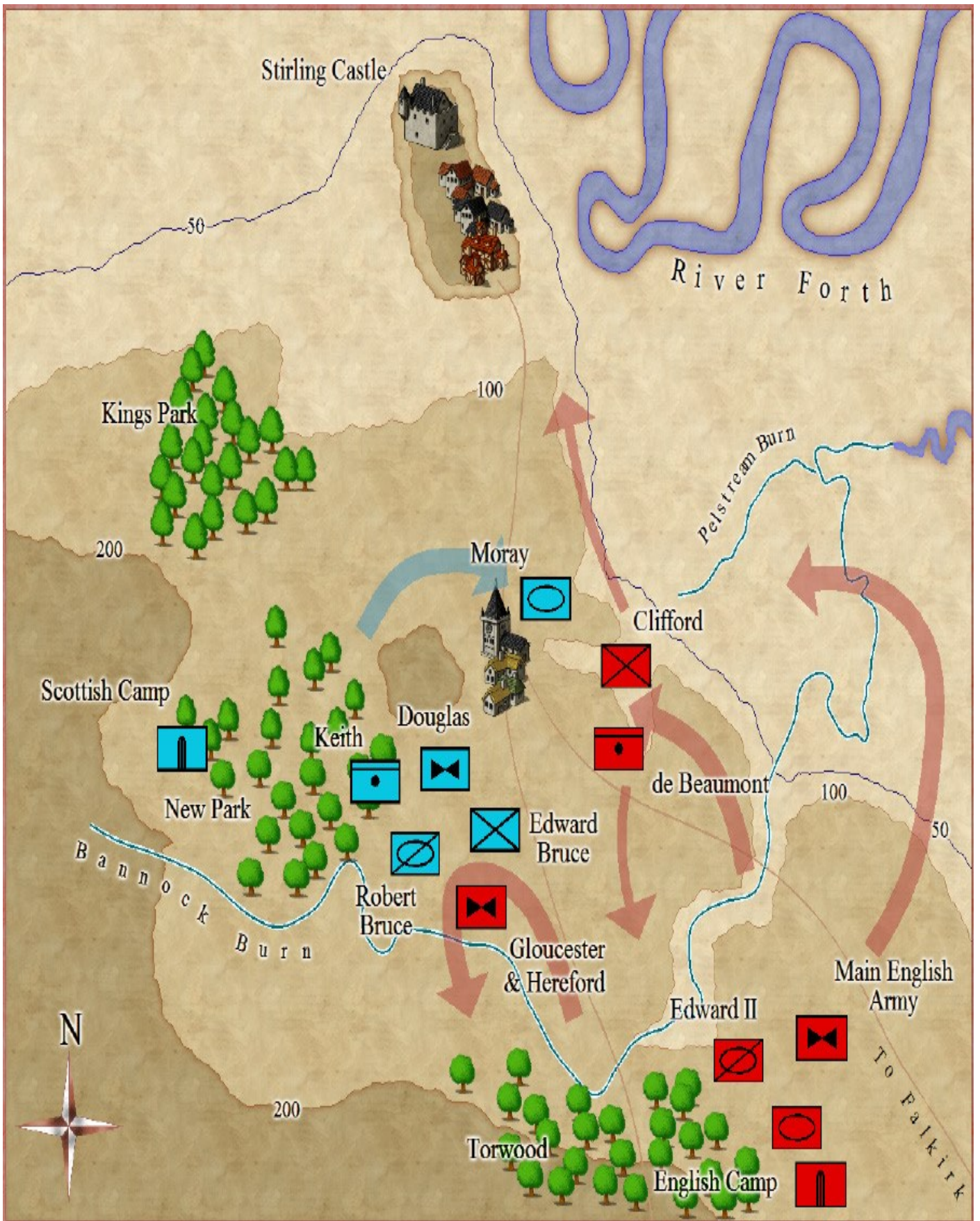
**Army** : About 5000 men + 2000  
'small folk'



**Leader** : King Edward II

**Commanders** : Humphrey de  
Bohun, Aymer de Valence,  
Robert Clifford

**Army** : About 25,000 men.  
Heavy cavalry, Welsh long and  
crossbow men



# The Battle of Bannockburn

Robert knew he had to plan carefully to defeat the English. He placed his army on a woody hill which sloped towards marshy ground near the River Forth. His army blocked the main road to Stirling Castle. The trees would stop the English knights charging at his men. They would also make it difficult for the English bowmen to fire arrows at the Scots. King Edward's soldiers would find the marshy ground at the bottom of the hill very difficult to cross. Their armour was heavy and it would make them sink in the mud! He also laid traps by digging large holes, filling them with spikes and covering them again with twigs and grass.

## Info gathering

Take these headings in your jotter and leave enough space to write information underneath them. Your teacher will give you a handout about each event of the Battle. You must take down key facts to use for a report/poster.

The First Battle—Mowbray vs Randolph

The Second Battle—Robert the Bruce vs Henry de Bohun

Nightfall—The English Knight Deserts

Day Two—The Main Battle

## Main Task

Using the information you have gathered, plus extra research from textbooks and the internet, you must compile an individual report/group poster about the Battle of Bannockburn. You must address...

**Why the battle took place.**

**Size of each army—how would you expect this to impact the battle?**

**Key figures—Who are the leaders and commanders?**

**Robert the Bruce's plan**

**Description of the key events of the battle.**

**Why you think the Scots won.**

# The Aftermath of Bannockburn

Learning intentions :

To be able to discuss the significance of Bannockburn

To describe the Declaration of Arbroath

## Glossary

Legitimate ; When a King is recognised to be the true and only King of a country.

The Battle of Bannockburn was a massive victory for Robert the Bruce and was a pivotal moment in the Wars of Independence. However, it did not fully secure independence for Scotland. Although many Scots now considered Robert the Bruce to be King, others did not. King Edward II and, more importantly, the Pope did not recognise Robert as the legitimate King of Scotland. For Scotland to be declared fully independent, Robert had to force Edward to recognise him as King and convince the Pope to recognise him as well.

The Scots captured many English prisoners during the battle. These were valuable prisoners who could be held for ransom. The Bruce traded the Earl of Hereford for the return of his wife, daughter, sister and Bishop Wishart. Robert also sent his brother Edward to raid the North of England, going as far as York. This led to King Edward II losing even more support in England. Robert then also sent his brother to Ireland to fight the English forces there. The aims of this invasion are unclear. Some historians think that Robert wanted his brother out of the way as he had ambitions to be a King. If he was successful in defeating the English in Ireland, he could make a claim to be King himself. Others believe that he wanted to join forces with the Irish, take over Ireland and then Wales and attack England from all sides. The invasion was ultimately unsuccessful and Edward Bruce was killed. From 1315-1319, Scotland continually invaded Northern England and took control of Berwick in 1318. Edward II brought a huge army north in 1322 to defeat Robert the Bruce. The Scots held the army back and King Edward himself was nearly captured.

## Task

- 1) Describe the actions of Robert the Bruce after Bannockburn. (3 marks)
- 2) What does Robert the Bruce's orders to his brother tell us about his character? *Hint—Think back to the patriot or opportunist exercise.*
- 3) Explain why Berwick was a significant symbol for the Scots to capture. (1 mark)

## Aftermath of Bannockburn Source Work

Source A is taken from the diary of a Scottish noble written in 1327.

Edward Bruce's invasion of Ireland was part of a longer strategy to put pressure on the English. It started with success as Edward Bruce defeated the English in battle at Carrickfergus. The Scots had hoped to gain the support of Irish lords and forge an alliance to fight against the English. This did not happen as the Irish lords did not pledge their support to the Scots. Edward was then killed in battle as he made his way through Ireland. The invasion had some success, as it scared the English and showed them what the Scottish were capable of.

- 1) What does Source A tell us about Edward Bruce's invasion of Ireland? (3 marks)
- 2) Why is a diary a useful type of source for us to use? *Think—why does someone write in a diary?*
- 3) Why is the author of this source useful if we want to find out about the invasion of Ireland?

## The Declaration of Arbroath

As Robert the Bruce put pressure on the English through invading Ireland and Northern England, he faced another problem. He had to convince the Pope that he was the rightful King of Scotland.

Think : Why would the Pope not want to accept Robert as King of Scotland?

The Pope summoned 4 Scottish Bishops to ask why they had not excommunicated Bruce from the Church. In response, the Scots sent the Declaration of Arbroath—a document signed by the Lords of Scotland and the Bishops declaring that Bruce was the rightful King and that Scotland should be independent. This did not secure independence, but softened the Pope's opposition to Bruce being King. The Pope then urged the English to make peace.



*"As long as but a hundred of us remain alive, never will we on any conditions be brought under English rule. It is in truth not for glory, nor riches, nor honours, that we are fighting, but for freedom - for that alone, which no honest man gives up but with life itself".*

### Task

Write your own Declaration of Arbroath. You should outline why you feel Robert the Bruce is the rightful King and why Scotland should be independent.

## Epilogue : Independence at Last

After years of fierce fighting between Scotland and England, the Scottish Wars of Independence came to an end on 17th March 1328.

Scotland and England came to an uneasy truce in 1323 as northern English lords pushed for peace. However, this only lasted 3 years and fighting started again as Edward II still refused to acknowledge Scotland as an independent nation.

In 1327, Edward II was killed. His death was the result of a plot between his wife, Isabella and another noble called Roger Mortimer. They had Edward killed and put his son, Edward III on the throne. Robert the Bruce used this to his advantage as Edward III was only 14. He launched more raids into northern England which forced the English to negotiate a peace settlement.

The Treaty of Edinburgh was signed on 17th March 1328. It was agreed between Scotland and England that :

Scotland was independent

King Robert was the rightful King

England had no claim to Scottish land

Roberts son, David, would marry England's Princess Joan to secure lasting peace.

Less than a year later, Robert the Bruce died on 7th June 1329. His body was interred at Dunfermline Abbey.

The Scottish Wars of Independence is one of the most important pieces of Scotland's History. It created legends such as Wallace and Bruce, and even inspired other revolutions like the American Revolution. Most importantly, it has had a lasting impact on the national identity in Scotland and has played a key role in much of the nationalism and patriotism seen throughout Scotland ever since.

