

## Scottish history

### The fascinating history of Scotland and Scottish government

Scotland has a long and fascinating history. Many tales of battles fought are closely linked to a desire to rule a well located country, rich in natural resources.

#### Scottish history in the making

The first written records of Scottish history date back to the arrival of the Roman Empire in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. The Roman province of Britannia reached as far north as the Antonine Wall, which once ran across central Scotland from the River Clyde to the Firth of Forth. To the north lay the territory of Caledonia, which was ruled by the Picti people.

Frequent battles with the Picts saw the Roman retreat to Hadrian's Wall – which spanned the north of England from Carlisle in the west to Wallsend in the east. By the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, the Romans had all but departed the land that is now known as Scotland.

In the 5<sup>th</sup> century, the north-west of Scotland was raided and settled by Gaels (Scoti), originating from Northern Ireland. They later established the Kingdom of Dalriada in Scotland's western regions.

In the same period, Angles conquered a territory south of the Antonine Wall to form the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Bernicia. This later became a part of the northern English kingdom of Northumbria.

At the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century, all of Scotland's kingdoms were overthrown to some extent by marauding Vikings. Numerous defeats by the Norse raiders eventually forced the Picts and Scoti to end their long-held hostility towards each other and unite in the 9<sup>th</sup> century to form the Kingdom of Scotland.

However, the Scottish battles for power did not end there. In the 12<sup>th</sup> Century, Anglo-Norman barons, including the Bruce family, laid claim to much of mainland Scotland. In exchange for land, these barons helped King David I to secure his claim to the throne and feudalise much of Scotland. By the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Alexander II and his son Alexander III were determined to bring all of the former Norwegian territories in the west of Scotland into their own territories. The Norwegian king, Hakon, sent a massive fleet to Scotland to hold on to his territories. In September 1263, the two forces clashed at the Battle of Largs in Ayrshire.

Three years later, with the conclusion of the Treaty of Perth, Magnus Hakonarson, King of Norway, gave up Scotland's western seaboard to Alexander III.

Scotland – whose throne passed through the control of the houses of Balliol and Bruce in the following years – had yet to win its freedom. The bloody wars of Scottish independence followed as the Scots tried to throw off the yoke of English influence.

Scottish landowner Sir William Wallace became one of the main battle leaders, defeating an English army at the Battle of Stirling Bridge in 1297.

Wallace served as Guardian of Scotland until his defeat at the Battle of Falkirk.

In 1305, he was captured in Robroyston, near Glasgow, and handed over to King Edward I of England, who had him hanged, drawn and quartered for high treason. In 1314, Robert Bruce inflicted a significant defeat on the English at the Battle of Bannockburn.

After Robert Bruce was excommunicated by the Pope in 1318 for killing John “Red” Comyn, a group of Scottish Nobles gathered to write the Declaration of Arbroath in support of his right to the Scottish throne.

Construction on one of Scotland’s most beautiful churches, Rosslyn Chapel, began in 1456. The complex carvings and lost burial vault of the church have been an inspiration to many theories of connections to the Knights Templar, Freemasonry, Pagan imagery and even that the Holy Grail may be hidden underneath.

James IV of Scotland holds the dubious honour of being the last ruling monarch of the British Isles to die on the battlefield. The Battle of Flodden Field between the Scots led by King James IV and English forces began on the afternoon of 9 September 1513 and by nightfall the Scottish forces had suffered a decisive defeat as well as the loss of their King.

Whilst conflicts with England continued for centuries, the “Auld Alliance” with France provided not only a military ally but also a continental flair to Scottish culture. Mary, Queen of Scots was born the daughter of a French mother and went on to become Queen Consort of France, albeit briefly, as well as of Queen of Scotland.

Having spent much of her childhood in France, Queen Mary spent only a few years on the Scottish throne before being forced to abdicate her throne in favour of her son James VI. Mary escaped to England to seek help from her cousin, Queen Elizabeth I, but would never see Scotland again. Mary was held prisoner in a succession of English castles for over 18 years before being beheaded for her part in a plot to take the English throne from Queen Elizabeth.

In 1603, after the death of Elizabeth I of England, James VI of Scotland succeeded to the English throne as James I. In 1707, the Acts of Union formally united Scotland with England and Wales as Great Britain.

During the Scottish Enlightenment and Industrial Revolution, Scotland became one of the commercial, intellectual and industrial powerhouses of Europe.

The country’s industrial decline following the Second World War was particularly acute but in recent decades Scotland has enjoyed a cultural and economic renaissance, fuelled in part by a resurgent financial services sector, the proceeds of North Sea oil and gas and, latterly, a devolved Parliament.

**Famous Scottish people** appear in just about every profession and activity that you can imagine.

Considering how small Scotland is, you may be a bit surprised to see how many historically significant roles have been played by famous Scots, but we’re not!

# Robert the Bruce

## The Battle of Bannockburn

Robert the Bruce, King of Scotland, is one of the great heroes of Scottish history. At that time the English king Edward II wanted to rule the whole country, but Robert the Bruce helped the Scots to resist and to form a large army which attacked Stirling castle. King Edward's army came to help the soldiers in the castle, and the two armies met at the small town of Bannockburn on June 24, 1314.

At that time the strongest part of the English army was bowmen. These bowmen, with their long bows had won many victories for the English in France. The Scots did not have many bowmen, so when the English archers attacked they could not defend themselves or fight back. However, Robert the Bruce was ready for this, and he called for his cavalry, (his soldiers on horseback). The horses were too quick for the bowmen, and the Scots knights chased them from the battlefield.

As the English knights advanced, Robert the Bruce ordered the Scots to put sharp sticks in front of their soldiers, and to dig holes in the ground for the English cavalry to fall into. As a result, the English were discouraged by what happened and they did not fight very well.

Many people in the area knew that a great battle was being fought, and when they heard that the Scots army was winning, they came to watch the battle. The English soldiers saw them appear on the top of a nearby hill, and they thought that they were another Scottish army arriving. The English were terrified that they would be caught between two Scots armies and they ran away. Now the Scots cavalry returned to the battle and the horsemen killed many English soldiers as they ran away. After this, the English army never really succeeded in conquering Scotland, also because they had to fight wars in other countries, such as France and Holland.

# William Wallace

Defender of Scottish Independence

**The Scottish Legend William Wallace** was originally a knight & landowner most famous for his victory against the English at the battle of Stirling Bridge in 1297. It was here that the Scots army led by Wallace & his co-leader Andrew Moray were outnumbered by an English army of over 11,000. Wallace became the Guardian of Scotland until his defeat at the Battle of Falkirk in 1305. Transported to London & handed over to King Edward 1, Wallace was put on trial for treason, his response was "I could not be a traitor to Edward, for I was never his subject", he then stated that the absent John Balliol was officially his king. Found Guilty Wallace was stripped naked & dragged through London by horse. He was then hung, drawn & quartered. As a warning to others, his limbs were separated & displayed throughout Scotland & England and his head placed on a pike on top of the London Bridge. Mel Gibson played him in the film Braveheart.

William Wallace was a National Hero who is, thanks to Hollywood, well-known all over the world. However, the truth of the whole story is a bit different than shown in the movie "**Braveheart**". Born in 1272, William Wallace was one of three sons of Sir Malcolm Wallace and Margaret de Crauford. His family probably originated from Ness nearby the English border. They were probably vassals of the powerful **Fitz-Alan family**. Today there is a memorial on the land the family owned at Elderslie. Not much is known about William Wallace's early years. He had 2 brothers. The elder brother was named Malcolm and the younger one John. After the death of his dad, William was brought up by his uncle who lived in Dunipace. Later he probably got some military experience and was well educated as his uncle taught him French and Latin.

William Wallace is a typical example of unbending commitment to **Scotland's independence**. It is in 1297 when Wallace **killed the English sheriff** in the town of Lanark in 1297. It is said that his motivation was for the slaying of his sweetheart. From 1297 he has his own army and joins forces with Andrew Murray. In the same year Wallace and Andrew besiege the Castle of Dundee. As result the English sent an army against them. It comes to a battle between both armies at the **Bridge over the River Forth in Stirling**. Unfortunately Murray received many wounds and died during the battle. The rocky hills were William Wallace's base and now the Wallace Monument can be visited there. Other men joined Wallace and together they were able to drive away the English. At the Kirk of the Forest Wallace was made the "Guardian of Scotland" and was knighted.

1298, **Edward I** who was English King also known as "Longshanks" sent a great army to Scotland and it came to a **battle in Falkirk**. The Scottish army was defeated during the battle and Wallace had to escape to France where he searched for support. He went to France and Rome hoping to receive some help. When he returned to Scotland in 1303 he realised that he had to start from scratch again to fight back against the English. While fighting back Wallace was betrayed and captured nearby Glasgow in 1305. First he was taken to **Dumbarton Castle** and later to London. In Westminster Hall his sham trial took place and Wallace was charged with treason which he denied. He was then tied to the tails of horses which dragged him to Smithfield Elms where he was hung and cut down. His parts of the body were sent to Scotland and his head stuck on a spike on Old London Bridge.

### **Charles Edward Stuart (Bonnie Prince Charlie) (1720 - 1788)**

Grandson of King James VII, and a direct descendant of Robert the Bruce, also known as the 'Young Pretender'. He led a rebellion against the English which was defeated at the Battle of Culloden in 1746. Charlie fled to France, aided by Flora MacDonald.

### **Flora MacDonald (1722 - 1790)**

Born on the Outer Hebridean Island of South Uist. Chance events led to her helping Bonnie Prince Charlie escape to France after his defeat at the Battle of Culloden in 1746. The daring and dangerous escape is commemorated in the song 'Over the Sea to Skye'.

### **Galgacus (Lived around 85AD)**

Also known as *Calgacus* He was a Caledonian tribal leader in the north of Scotland who united the tribes and led the resistance against Roman armies who were pushing north into Scotland. His armies defeated the Romans in the Battle of Mons Graupius in the north of Scotland in 83 AD. It's thought that Galgacus was the first Scot to be actually named in history.

### **King William I "The Lion" (1143-1214)**

Crowned a Scottish King in 1165, William reigned for almost 50 years. He was red-haired, brave and full of energy, and although that may have contributed to his nickname of 'The Lion', it is more likely to have developed because he adopted the heraldic symbol of the red lion rampant on a yellow background. That symbol is still seen on Scotland's [Lion Rampant flag](#) today.

### **Kenneth MacAlpin (834 - 858)**

The first Scottish King. Crowned as the first King of 'Alba' uniting both the Picts and the Scots for the first time in 843 AD. Considered to be the 'Founder of Scotland'.

### **Mary, Queen of Scots (1542 - 1587)**

Born at Linlithgow Palace. Crowned Queen of Scotland in 1542 and was the last Roman Catholic monarch of Scotland. Mary was a tragic queen, daughter of King James V and cousin to Queen Elizabeth I of England. Married three times, Mary almost became one of the wives of England's King Henry VIII. She abdicated the throne in 1567, and was then put in prison by Queen Elizabeth I and executed for treason 1587. British schoolchildren still sing a 'happy little song entitled 'Mary Queen of Scots got her head chopped off' in remembrance of her beheading!

### **Lord MacBeth (c.1005 - 1057)**

Last Gaelic King of Scotland. Immortalized (although totally inaccurately) in Shakespeare's play 'MacBeth'. He was the commander-in-chief of King Duncan's army and killed the King in 1040, succeeding him to the throne where he ruled until killed in battle in 1057.

### **Robert the Bruce (1274 - 1329)**

It's possible that Robert the Bruce was born in Ayrshire or Dumfriesshire but there are no definitive records to prove either. He declared himself King of Scotland in 1306. After a less-than-heroic start to his reign, Robert The Bruce and his army defeated the English at the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314, and resisted another English invasion 8 years later. These victories marked the turning point for Scottish independence and led to the Treaty of Edinburgh in 1328 which recognized Scotland's independence. This was one of Scotlands' greatest victories and Robert the Bruce (also sometimes known as the Guardian of Scotland' was one of Scotland's heroes.

### **William Wallace (1274 - 1305)**

Outlaw and defender of Scottish independence. A brave and patriotic leader. Defeated the army of Edward I at the Battle of Stirling Bridge. Shortly after Wallace's execution, Robert the Bruce was able to re-establish Scotland's independence.

### **John Witherspoon (1723 - 1794)**

Born in Gifford, East Lothian. Joined the clergy, becoming an ordained minister in 1745. Emigrated to the USA in 1786. Helped to draft the Declaration of Independence (he was also the only clergyman to signed it, but 21 of the 56 signatories were of Scottish descent).

### **Alexander Selkirk (1676 - 1721)**

Born in Lower Largo, Fife. A Scottish sailor, he was the inspiration for Daniel Defoe's 'Robinson Crusoe'. Selkirk spent over 4 years (1704 - 1709) after being stranded on a tiny, uninhabited tropical island in the Pacific.

### **Saint Andrew (c. 5 A.D. - c.50 A.D.)**

The Patron Saint of Scotland. One of Jesus Christ's disciples, and brother of the disciple Peter. There is more than one legend surrounding this famous Scot, but the most popular has it that Andrew was crucified on an X-shaped cross (known as the Saltire Cross). Around 370 AD some of his remains were brought to Scotland by Saint Rule on the strength of a vision he had experienced. In 832 AD the Pictish King Angus II had a vision of St. Andrew on the eve of his battle with the Anglo Saxon army. The morning of the battle itself he and his army were stunned to see a huge white Saltire cross shining against the background of a bright blue sky - they took this as an omen of impending victory... and were indeed victorious. The saltire cross then became the national emblem of Scotland (learn more about the saltire flag - also known as the Cross of Saint Andrew - here [Flag Of Scotland](#)) and Andrew was declared the Patron Saint of Scotland. Saint Andrews Day is celebrated on the 30th November every every year.

### **Saint Columba (c. 521 - 597)**

Although actually Irish (he was born in Donegal, Ireland), St. Columba is seen as Scotland's second patron saint (after St. Andrew). He was a missionary and established a monastery on the Isle of Iona in 563, and tried to convert the native Picts to Christianity. The abbey and the community established on the Isle of Iona still exist today.

### **Saint Mungo - also known as St Kentigern (520-612)**

Believed to have been born in Fife, the son of a pagan King, he was named Kentigern. 'Mungo' means 'dear' and became his nickname, eventually he was known as St. Mungo. He was a missionary and founded a monastery by the River Clyde, where the city of Glasgow stands today. He later became the Patron Saint of Glasgow. It's said that he met both St. David (Patron Saint of Wales) and St. Columba and that he performed many miracles.

### **Saint Ninian (c. 360 - 432)**

Very little is known about Saint Ninian, but he is said to have been a Christian missionary in Scotland, preaching Christianity to the Picts. He is believed to be Scotland's first Saint.

### **Famous Scottish People - The Arts**

The Scots are a creative group, and Scottish culture is filled with poets, authors, singers, actors and more. Here's a selection of those famous Scottish people.....

### **Robert Burns (1759 - 1796)**

One of the most famous Scots, whose influence has touched people across the world! Born in Alloway, Ayrshire. Although born into a very poor family, Robert (aka 'Rabbie') Burns was very intelligent and excelled in many areas of academics. He's a 'huge' (metaphorically speaking), and much loved, figure in Scottish history. Poet and writer... his work was varied and could be in turn heart-wrenchingly romantic, wickedly funny and satirical, down-to-earth and true-to-life and much more. The well-known song that you hear every New Year's Eve - 'Auld Lang Syne' - may be one of his best-known works. Other famous poems include 'Address to a Haggis', 'To A Mouse' (one that my nana would quote from regularly!), 'My Heart's in the Highlands' (another one I heard a bit of often!), 'Tam O'Shanter' and 'O' My Luve is like a red, red rose'. Every year on January 25th, 'Burns Night' celebrates the birthday of one of Scotland's most beloved sons with a traditional 'Burns Supper' (usually a meal of 'haggis and neeps', plus some good Scottish whisky and the reading of some of Burns work) . Rabbie died at only 37 years old.

### **Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1859 - 1930)**

Born in Edinburgh. His family was interested and involved in creative works including sketching, illustration, languages and literature. He was the creator of the famous fictional detective Sherlock Holmes, (Charles was a doctor and the character of Sherlock Holmes was in part based on one of his medical school teachers). He was knighted in 1902.

### **Sir Walter Scott (1771 - 1832)**

Born in Edinburgh. Scottish patriot and qualified lawyer, he was a very popular writer and poet of his time.... perhaps THE most popular author of his day. Some of his best-known works include 'Ivanhoe', 'Rob Roy' and 'The Lady of The Lake'. He also was involved in the business world, and became part owner of a printing and publishing company in 1806.

### **Robert Louis Stevenson (1850 - 1894)**

Born in Edinburgh. Studied engineering and law, but instead became a talented author and poet. His most famous works include "Treasure Island" published in 1882 and 'Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde' and 'Kidnapped' published in 1886.