

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

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"He cut the men down
in a flash, incensed that
the English would dare
tell him what to do in his
own country"

WILLIAM WALLACE

Scottish, 1270-1305

Brief Bio

Little is known about Wallace's early years, but it is thought he was an educated man and a son of a county knight. But his growing anger at the takeover of Scotland by the English is in no doubt. The humiliating defeat of the Scots at the Battle of Dunbar, which effectively gave Edward I complete control over Scotland, together with personal vendettas, led to him jointly leading an army to bloody victory in the Battle of Stirling Bridge. He would later assume the title of Guardian of the Kingdom of Scotland.



BRAVEHEART'S BATTLE

William Wallace's Scottish rebellion against the English and their repressive king Edward I had its finest hour in a bloody battle on the outskirts of Stirling

Written by David Crookes

William Wallace strode confidently among his troops. Thousands of men were lined up on high ground close to the Augustinian monastery of Cambuskenneth Abbey near Stirling. They stood still, looking down at the English army that had gathered not a mile away, studying them carefully. Every so often there would be a rousing cheer and a defiant chant. Wallace would give them sparks of energy, explain what he expected of them and get them excited. This would be their moment of glory, he told them. This was a chance to help bring Scotland back into the hands of the Scots.

It was just before dawn on 11 September 1297. Despite a slight breeze and a morning chill, things were about to warm up considerably. Only a few days earlier the Scottish force had been laying siege to Dundee Castle, which the English held thanks to their victory at Dunbar the previous year. However, when news reached

Wallace that the English army was heading to Scotland on the order of English King Edward I, Wallace called off the siege and led his men south to meet their oldest and fiercest enemy.

The English didn't have the element of surprise, but they looked impressive enough. Wallace watched them as they gathered south of the river, noting the many English banners fluttering in the breeze. The knights were sitting on the backs of large warhorses in their full regalia. His own troops were mostly infantry armed with long spears and they looked decidedly less professional. On paper, the English were the stronger side. Led by John de Warenne, Earl of Surrey, and Hugh de Cressingham, the English treasurer of Scotland, they were well versed in battle, a fighting machine that had recently crushed the Welsh in battle.

The Scots were far less experienced, raised on the basis of Scottish service and effectively men from the horseless classes forming a common

army. The English thought them to be of lesser class, disorganised and weak, but they had one thing in spades: righteous anger. Handled well, Wallace believed they could win any battle and, as an experienced guerrilla campaigner, he hadn't come to face the English unprepared.

But who was William Wallace and how did he come to jointly command an army against the English? Some of our knowledge of the man comes from the writings of a storyteller called Blind Harry. He tells of a landowner's son who was educated, able to read and write in Latin and French and who was training to become a priest. Around the end of the 14th century, Walter Bower described Wallace as, "a tall man with the body of a giant, cheerful in appearance with agreeable features, broad-shouldered and big-boned [...] pleasing in appearance but with a wild look, broad in the hips, with strong arms and legs, a most spirited fighting-man, with all his limbs very strong and firm."

WEAPONS USED TO INFLICT DEATH AND DESTRUCTION

Bow and arrow

Although the Iron Age had made swords cheap, the bow was popular for its accuracy and range. The Welsh had proved themselves adept at using them but the user needed space to operate. As it proved at the Battle of Stirling Bridge, the cramped conditions north of the river and the aggressive nature of the Scots' attack gave little opportunity to use them, but they could be devastating.

Battle-axe

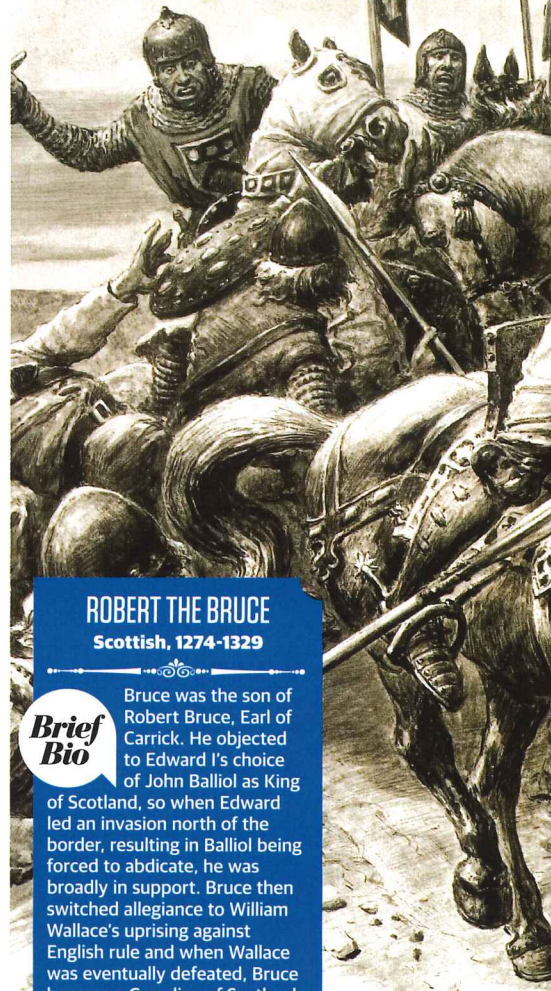
The battle-axe was designed for one-handed combat, although some required the use of two hands. Although they were not as popular in the 13th century, they were nonetheless used. They would struggle to hack through steel-plate armour, but their weight and sharpness would make light work of most enemies. The Scots would also have had axes and indeed used them to great effect on the English troops they felled in Stirling.

Claymore

Measuring up to 152 centimetres (60 inches) in length, the claymore was a sword favoured by William Wallace. It was first used in the 13th century and it came with a twisted wooden hilt that afforded a good grip. It was better if the enemy was further away due to its size, but it had a long ricasso so, if an enemy got close, the user could grip further down the sword and stab at shorter range.

Dirk

A long thrusting dagger, the dirk was used by officers in the Scottish Highland regiments and it was prominent in the 13th century. It is thought William Heselrig, the English sheriff or Lanark, was killed by a dirk and that Wallace killed the leader of a group of English youths using one when he was 19. The dirk would double up as a utility tool and it was worn on a Scotsman's kilt.



ROBERT THE BRUCE Scottish, 1274-1329

Brief Bio

Bruce was the son of Robert Bruce, Earl of Carrick. He objected to Edward I's choice of John Balliol as King of Scotland, so when Edward led an invasion north of the border, resulting in Balliol being forced to abdicate, he was broadly in support. Bruce then switched allegiance to William Wallace's uprising against English rule and when Wallace was eventually defeated, Bruce became a Guardian of Scotland in 1298 and later went on to successfully stake his claim to the Scottish throne.

The Battle of Stirling Bridge resulted in a great victory for the Scottish

Sparked by the appointment of John Balliol as King of the Scots in 1292 on the choosing of King Edward I of England, Scotland had effectively come to be ruled by England, ending 100 years of relative peace between the two countries. Balliol had eventually attempted to rebel against this control, siding Scotland with France when Edward wanted to go to war with the French. Balliol made an unsuccessful attempt at attacking Cumberland that saw the English sack Berwick in retaliation. In the middle of all of this carnage, Wallace's anger was growing more and more intense.

JOHN DE WARRENNE English, 1231-1304

Brief Bio

The 6th Earl of Surrey was a military commander during Edward I's reign. He led the English to victory in the Battle of Dunbar in 1296. Appointed warden of the kingdom and land of Scotland, he returned to England but headed back north to fight against Wallace. Although defeated, he did win at Falkirk in 1298, but then the power of the English army was so great that this was expected.

Legend has it that a flash point occurred when he was approached by a group of English soldiers demanding the fish he had caught from a local Scottish river. Wallace offered them half in an attempt at appeasement, but the soldiers refused the offer and the rage in this great bear of a man boiled over. He cut the men down in a flash, incensed that the English would dare tell him what to do in his own country.

The biggest turning point, though, and the one which had led to Wallace jointly leading an army with Andrew Moray, came in the summer of 1297. Wallace and his men were in Lanark and became involved in a skirmish with English



A NATION DIVIDED

A selection of Scotland's most important clans

Cumming



Most notable figure John III Comyn, Lord of Badenoch was Guardian of Scotland between 1296 and 1306. Together with his father and cousin, he attacked Carlisle, which Robert Bruce was defending for King Edward I.

How powerful was the clan? As the most powerful clan in Scotland in the 13th century, they had great influence over the political scene and they played a major role in the Wars of Scottish Independence.

Donald



Most notable figure Aonghas Óg of Islay fought for Robert the Bruce at the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314, which helped the Donald clan to cement its strong and enviable position in Scotland.

How powerful was the clan? Clan Donald was one of the largest clans and King Robert the Bruce often held it close to the right wing of the Scottish army when engaged in battle.

Douglas



Most notable figure Sir William Douglas the Hardy joined William Wallace and fought for Scottish independence. He had earlier refused to accept the claim of Edward I.

How powerful was the clan? In the Late Middle Ages, the Douglas clan was a powerful influence in lowland Scotland. Their original seat was Douglas Castle in Lanarkshire.

ATLANTIC OCEAN

ENGLAND

"Wallace would not order his men to charge until an ideal number of English had crossed"

soldiers. Although Wallace maimed one of them, they decided to flee. Some historians believe that when the English sheriff of Lanark William Heselrig found out, he sought revenge on Wallace's wife, Mirren Braidfute, ordering her to be raped and executed. Wallace is said to have visited Heselrig late at night and split his skull in half. By killing one of Scotland's most high-profile rulers, Wallace became viewed as a courageous man who wasn't afraid to fight.

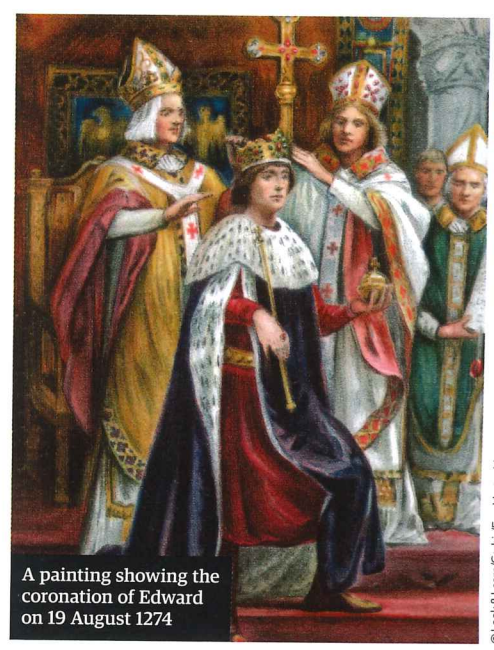
These actions eventually led the son of a county knight to become the figurehead of a nation's battle for independence, waiting with his army on a hill in the cold Scottish autumn of 1297 for battle. Full of ambition and bristling with built-up hate, his forces were boosted when Andrew De Moray and his troops joined him. De Moray was an esquire who had led a rebellion against the English in the highlands and northeast Scotland. De Moray had captured a number of Scottish towns, including Elgin and Inverness, and together they formulated a plan. They would wait, patiently sit out the English

manoeuvres and then strike when the moment was right.

The River Forth separated the two armies and it flowed fast, widening to the east and becoming very marshy to the west. If the English were going to make any headway in their battle against the Scots then they simply had to cross it. Swimming wasn't an option - it was far too dangerous a proposition given the equipment and armour the troops were carrying. The best way, the consensus suggested, was to use a narrow, wooden bridge close by.

The Earl of Surrey was not convinced. Stirling Bridge would only allow men to cross in small numbers and it was wide enough for just two horses side-by-side. Once they got across this bridge they would then be in boggy conditions with the Scots on high ground.

Realising the situation wasn't favourable, Surrey agreed to mediate a truce and so sent Malcolm Earl of Lennox and his relative James Stewart. They came back empty-handed - Wallace believed the advantage was with the Scottish and he was there to fight, not talk.



A painting showing the coronation of Edward on 19 August 1274

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ENGLISH
NUMBER OF TROOPS:
13,000

LEADER

JOHN DE WARRENNE

The 6th Earl of Surrey had defeated the Scots a year earlier in the Battle of Dunbar and he was accompanied in leading the army by Hugh de Cressingham, treasurer of the English administration in Scotland.

Strengths Had fought in many battles, including Edward I's Welsh campaigns during which Wales was captured.

Weaknesses Known for switching sides, he wasn't the most loyal of men.



KEY UNIT

KNIGHTS

Sitting atop their warhorses in full regalia, the knights were well trained, experienced, ruthless and accustomed to winning.

Strengths Honour and chivalry was important to the knights, themselves professional heavy cavalry soldiers.

Weaknesses In the case of the Battle of Stirling Bridge, the horses made them cumbersome fighters and made crossing the bridge more difficult.

KEY WEAPON

SWORD

The Iron Age had made swords cheaper and changed the way they were made, but they were still a symbol of status and carried by the knights as a sign of their superiority over others.

Strengths Swords proved ideal for cutting, and to get through armour plating or leather, they also came in handy for thrusting.

Weaknesses They were more ideal for close-up fighting. The longbows of the Welsh bowmen were more effective for range.

THE BATTLE OF STIRLING BRIDGE

1 South of the river

The English army, some 13,000-strong and numbering some of the country's fiercest fighters, marched to the southern banks of the River Forth close to Stirling Castle in early-September 1297. They were led by the 6th Earl of Surrey, John de Warenne, as well as Hugh de Cressingham, treasurer of the English administration in Scotland.

3 Abbey Craig

Wallace and De Moray asked their Scottish army to take up a position to the north of the river on a large rocky hill called Abbey Craig. It gave them a commanding view of the area - which by this point included the large English army around 1.6km (1mi) away.

2 North of the river

Having caught wind of the advancing army, William Wallace and Andrew de Moray, who had led the rising in northern Scotland earlier that summer, assembled 8,000 men. The Scots arrived first, so they were able to assess the lay of the land and take an advantageous position.

5 Kildean Ford

Before the English attempted to cross Stirling Bridge, Sir Richard Lundie, who had switched sides from the Scots to the English, suggested they cross at Kildean Ford further along the river. De Cressingham, mindful of the expense and wanting a quicker crossing, refused.

4 Stirling Bridge

The River Forth was not an easy stretch of water to cross. It cuts across Scotland, flowing east, and it is very deep. A narrow, wooden bridge at Stirling was an enticing crossing point. It certainly beat swimming across which, given the armour of the English, would have been incredibly difficult.

The situation for the English was far from ideal, but De Cressingham still argued they should push on and convinced Surrey. At the break of dawn on 11 September, the English and Welsh infantry began to cross the bridge. Wallace saw this and spoke to his troops again, ensuring they were ready for a brutal confrontation. The Scottish troops would meet the English head-on through the middle. De Moray's soldiers would go down the flanks. For now, though, it was a game of patience - Wallace would not order his men to charge until an ideal number of English had crossed.

While all this went on Surrey was - incredibly - sound asleep in his tent. By the time he finally awoke, hundreds of troops had made their way across. In farcical scenes, Wallace watched

bemused as Surrey ordered the troops back over the bridge to the south of the river once more. It showed a dismissive attitude to the Scots - it meant Surrey cared little about the embarrassing, disorganised appearance this would display to the opposition. The English, his actions said, would win no matter what time he ordered his troops over.

As Wallace stood on high ground, able to see everything around him, he could see the trap that the English would be walking into and knew they were overconfident. Once they got over the river, they would have to gather on a confined narrow loop. The English soldiers would be naturally surrounded on three sides by water and the only possible ways out of that were either into the river, back across the bridge



6 Aborted attempt

On the morning of 11 September 1297, the English decided to cross Stirling Bridge. However, Surrey overslept, so even though it had taken a long time for the English and Welsh archers to cross, they were ordered back. The Scots watched in disbelief as the soldiers went back south.

8 Scots charge down

Having patiently waited for sufficient numbers to cross, Wallace and De Moray ordered their spearman down Abbey Craig to meet the English army. The English were trapped in the loop, their only way to escape being back over the river. There was no way they could retreat fast enough.

7 English make a move

Crossing at Kildean Ford would have been easier - it was wider and would have allowed an easier passage. They would also have cut the Scots off from the rear. Lundie said Stirling Bridge - which could hold two horsemen side-by-side, was a dangerous and slow way to cross but the English crossed anyway. They gathered in the loop of the River Forth.

9 Death in the river

As foot soldiers were being slaughtered and mountain knights found their horses were getting stuck in muddy ground, mayhem ensued. The English were either cut down or drowned in the river. Some English knights got back over the bridge and some others swam to safety. Surrey ordered the bridge be set alight to save the army that had yet to cross.

10 Wounded men and spirit

De Moray was badly injured in the battle, Cressingham was captured and flayed alive and Surrey retreated and galloped away. Wallace had achieved a great victory. A total of 5,000 English infantry and 100 knights had been killed in what amounted to an embarrassment for Edward I.

KING EDWARD I

English, 1239-1307

Brief Bio

Son of Henry III, King Edward I had a burning desire to expand his empire and was a warring king, albeit one well established and highly regarded by his peers. Having invaded Wales in 1277, eventually taking over in 1301, he had his eyes on France and Scotland. To fund his battles, he raised money through ever-increasing taxation and grew an army that was greatly feared in the process.

or through any advancing Scots line. Surrey was aware of the danger but De Cressingham and others were insistent. A Council of War was called and, finally, Surrey decided he was ready to attack. The troops were sent back over the bridge and Wallace readied his spearmen who were arranged in groups, each with a specific instruction for the upcoming battle.

The Scottish spearmen made up the bulk of Wallace's army - they were the Scots' answer to the English cavalry. With their 3.7-metre (12-foot) long sharp poles, the spears were a deadly alternative. Held aloft and at full charge, they would have caused many a rivals' mouth to gape open in fearful anticipation.

For a second time, though, there was a delay as Surrey decided to approach Wallace. Recalling

his troops, he sent two Dominican friars to see the Scotsman but Wallace's reply was clear: "Tell your commander that we are not here to make peace but to do battle, defend ourselves and liberate our kingdom. Let them come on, and we shall prove this in their very beards."

The English were again having doubts and an alternative crossing was pointed out: a ford further along the river that would not only be quicker to cross but would allow the English to get behind the Scots. De Cressingham ruled this out, though. He was worried that it would take too long to move the soldiers again and that this would incur extra costs for the English king. There was no persuading him otherwise.

The English troops crossed the bridge again and Wallace knew this time they wouldn't turn



**SCOTTISH
NUMBER OF TROOPS:
8,000**

LEADER

WILLIAM WALLACE

Wallace's stature as a fearless leader rose following his slaying of the English sheriff of Lanark, William Heselrig. Men joined him, striking at Scone, Ancrum and Dundee. He proved to be a good, tactical thinker.

Strengths Unafraid to get stuck in, his beliefs and desire for a free Scotland motivated his army.

Weaknesses Lack of true nobility meant he wasn't universally accepted.



KEY UNIT

SPEARMAN

With the majority of the Scots nobles under lock and key in England, Wallace's army was made up of men from lower society, but they were strong and willing.

Strengths Although seen as peasant amateur fighters, they nevertheless fought well as a unit thanks to the army's tactics.

Weaknesses When up against better-organised opposition, as proved at Falkirk, they were left wanting.

KEY WEAPON

LONG SPEARS



Although the Scots used axes and knives, their 3.7m (12ft) long spears caused the most damage. It was a spear that killed Hugh Cressingham, piercing his armour.

Strengths The length of the spears provided extra distance between the soldier and his victim.

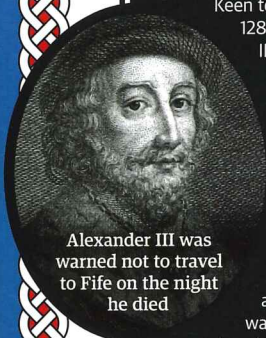
Weaknesses They were very unwieldy whenever they had to be used in close-quarters fighting.

THREE REASONS FOR WAR

Death of King Alexander III

Keen to see his second wife on 18 March 1286, the King of Scots Alexander III travelled on horseback from Edinburgh Castle to the royal palace of Kinghorn in Fife.

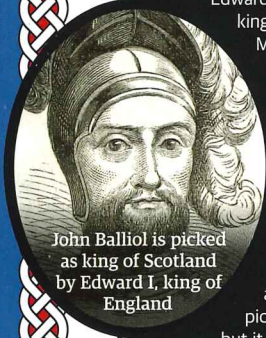
Although he had been warned about the treacherous weather, the king fell from his horse along the way and died, aged 44. Since his three children, Margaret, Alexander and David, were also dead, it left his three-year-old granddaughter Margaret as the sole heir. However, there was a desire by the Scots to be ruled by a king rather than a queen, which prompted a call for King Edward I of England to intervene.



Alexander III was warned not to travel to Fife on the night he died

Greater English control

Edward I was asked to help pick a new king for Scotland. He suggested Margaret marry his eldest son, six-year-old Prince Edward, but before this could take place - a move that would have made Prince Edward king - Margaret fell ill and died in 1290. She had not been crowned at this point. Edward I agreed to judge who should be crowned next but, in the process, tightened his grip on Scotland and began to seize assets. He picked nobleman John Balliol as king but it became clear Edward I planned to use him as a puppet.

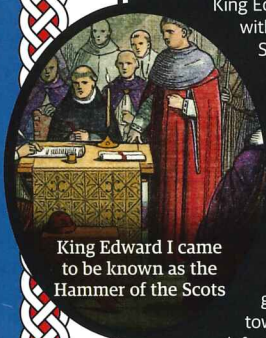


John Balliol is picked as king of Scotland by Edward I, king of England

French-Scottish treaty

King Edward I wanted to go to war with France and he insisted the Scots join him in the battle but in 1295 John Balliol and Philip IV of France signed a treaty instead. If England invaded either Scotland or France, the other agreed to invade England. Edward I saw his grip loosening and in 1296 sent troops to the Scottish border. Balliol's decision to sack Cumberland was met with great force in the then-Scottish town of Berwick, leading to Balliol's defeat and subsequent dethroning.

The English army continued to move north to Dunbar where a battle took place. The War of Independence was on.



King Edward I came to be known as the Hammer of the Scots



A depiction of King Edward I leading an attack against the Scottish

SCOTLAND'S LONG JOURNEY TO STIRLING BRIDGE

Hadrian's Wall

As Roman Emperor Hadrian rules Britain, he decides to build a defence wall to help prevent an invasion from the north. With locally sourced materials, the wall reaches a length of 117.5km (73mi). **122 CE**

Western independence

There are two Gaelic kingdoms called Dairada, one in Ireland and one in western Scotland. They are dependent on each other but King Aidan secures Scottish independence for Argyllshire. **575**

Capture of Edinburgh

The Kingdom of Northumbria, formed in 604, decides to capture Edinburgh from Gododdin, a kingdom in the northeast of Britannia. It keeps it for three centuries. **638**

Burning of Iona

Iona, a small island in the Inner Hebrides on the western coast of Scotland, is set alight by the Vikings which had been raiding and trading from the 8th century. **802**

Scottish king

Kenneth MacAlpin I is crowned king and begins the House of Alpin. The crown will alternate between two descendant branches of MacAlpin. **842**

ESSENTIAL WALLACE FIGURES

1,600

In 1296, this number of Scotland's leading nobles swore loyalty to Edward I. Wallace did not.

1300

The year the king of France wrote to his envoys in Rome demanding that they should help Wallace, leading some to believe he had personally visited the French king.

5

The amount of places parts of his dead body were displayed - his head was placed on London Bridge and his limbs were put on show in Perth, Stirling, Berwick and Newcastle.

Wallace was first named in English chronicles in this year, following the murder of the English sheriff of Lanark.

1297

715

The number of villages in the north of England burnt by Wallace and his men following their victory at Stirling Bridge.

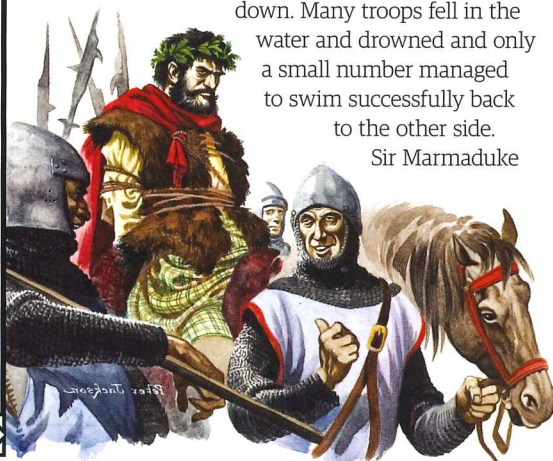
back - the battle was now imminent. He urged patience to his men, commanding his troops crouched on the hillside, eager to get going, to rein in their blood lust until enough Englishmen had crossed.

Eventually, as the hours ticked by, around 5,400 English and Welsh infantry as well as some cavalry had made their way across the river. Before they could even begin to advance forward in order, though, Wallace gave the word.

The Scots' spearmen charged from their advantageous position on the lower slopes of the Ochil Hills, down toward the unprepared English cavalry. One Scottish group went toward the bridge, cutting it off and preventing more English from crossing. Surrey's hope that his bowmen would be able to take their positions was destroyed since they had yet to get over the bridge. The Scots were nullifying them. Another group of Scots went down the other wing and a large group went into the middle. As the horses were skewered and the knights fell to the ground, the blood began to mix with the cold and clear water in the Scottish river.

The English were cut to pieces as the Scots raged forward, pushing their rivals back toward the river. The English troops were separated into much smaller groups by the thrust of the Scots, making it even easier to cut them down. Many troops fell in the water and drowned and only a small number managed to swim successfully back to the other side.

Sir Marmaduke



"The English were cut to pieces as the Scots raged forward, pushing their rivals back toward the river"

Tweng was the only knight to escape with his life.

Amid the carnage, De Moray, who had been commanding the northern Scots, was seriously wounded, but Wallace was getting stuck in, urging his troops to continue pressing on. It caused panic among the English, who had thought the battle would be a mere formality. Unused to what they

saw as savagery by an untrained army, they were trying to retreat as best they could but soon found themselves completely and utterly surrounded.

Surrey, who had not crossed the bridge, was aghast. He ordered the rest of his men, some 5,000 more, to retreat. The bridge was set on fire to prevent the Scots from getting across and inflicting further damage. The battle continued for not much longer than an hour, with screams, shouts, and the clash of metal piercing through the air, the looming presence of Stirling Castle behind them as a reminder that a natural fortress could be just as impenetrable as a man-made one. The remaining Englishmen took flight to Berwick with those lagging behind captured or killed.

Surrey escaped unharmed, but the same couldn't be said of his reputation. De Cressingham had been one of the first to cross north and he fell during his attempt to escape, cut through by a Lochaber axe. The Scots took his body away where it was flayed and the skin cut into small pieces. Wallace took a broad strip of De Cressingham's skin and used it to make a baldric for his sword.

William Wallace had secured a great victory. It was the first time the Scottish had defeated the English in a significant battle since the Dark Ages. The freedom for which Wallace strived was still a long way off, though, and there would be more battles and challenges to come. As he stood there, exhausted and triumphant on the battlefield, he pushed thoughts of the future out of his mind. For now, he would savour the taste of a victory that once more made a nation dream - and perhaps even believe - that it could achieve freedom once again.

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Feudal system introduced
David I becomes king and rules until 1153. His reign is referred to as the Davidian Revolution because he founds burghs, monasteries, feudalism and the Normanisation of the Scottish government. **1124**

Allegiance to England
The Treaty of Falaise is signed by the captive Scottish King William I and King Henry II. It states that Scotland is to be subordinate to the English crown. **1174**

Treaty of York
Alexander II of Scotland and Henry II of England set new boundaries for Scotland. Scotland ceases claiming hereditary rights to Northumberland, Cumberland and Westmorland. **1237**

Treaty of Perth
An agreement between Scotland and Norway ends conflict and recognises Scottish sovereignty over the Hebrides and the Isle of Man. Norway is given sovereignty over Shetland and Orkney. **1266**

Claims of independence
The Scottish Wars of Independence are sparked thanks to numerous factors, not least the granting of the Scottish throne to John Balliol. It leads to the rise of William Wallace. **1292**