



ROBERT THE BRUCE
EARL OF CARRICK
LORD OF ANNANDALE
& KING OF SCOTS
11 JULY 1274 - 7 JUNE 1329



WHO WAS ROBERT THE BRUCE?

This year marks the 750th anniversary of the birth of Robert the Bruce, one of Scotland's most revered warriors! Often hailed as "Good King Robert," he's celebrated for his pivotal victory over the English army at Bannockburn in 1314.

OUTLAW KING

A Netflix original, "Outlaw King", follows Robert the Bruce's battle to regain control after being made an outlaw by the King of England for taking the Scottish Crown.

Inspired by the film? Walk in Bruce's footsteps! Explore real sites and stories - castles, abbeys, and filming locations - to uncover his legacy across Scotland.



THE HISTORIC SCOTLAND EXPLORER PASS

Ideal for groups or individuals visiting a number of properties, holders can visit as many Historic Scotland sites as they wish – there are many not connected to Robert the Bruce to visit in addition to the sites featured in our trail.

- [Visit all our sites with one pass](#)
- Guaranteed entry when you pre-book
- Pass is valid for 14 consecutive days.
- [Find out more](#)

**We fight not for glory,
nor for wealth, nor
honour but only and
alone for freedom
which no good man
surrenders but with his
life.**

The Declaration of Arbroath, 6 April 1320

ROBERT'S TRAIL

NORTH & GRAMPIAN

1 KILDRUMMY CASTLE

'The noblest of northern castles', Kildrummy was owned by the Earls of Mar, who were linked to Bruce by marriage. After seizing the throne in 1306, Bruce sent his wife Elizabeth and daughter Marjorie to Kildrummy for their safety, but the castle was soon besieged by English forces. In 1335, Bruce's sister Christina defended Kildrummy against a pro-English force under David, Earl of Atholl.

2 DEER ABBEY

These tranquil Cistercian monastery ruins were founded by William Comyn, Earl of Buchan, in the early 1200s. In 1308, the abbey was probably sacked when Bruce drove William's grandson John into exile and ordered Buchan be ravaged fra end till end and sparyt nane'.

3 URQUHART CASTLE

Magnificent Urquhart Castle on the shores of Loch Ness was captured by Bruce in 1307 as he unleashed his fury against the Comyns (Sir Alexander Comyn of Badenoch had been made constable at Urquhart by Edward I three years earlier). Around 1312, Bruce gave Urquhart to his favoured nephew, Sir Thomas Randolph, Earl of Moray, who later led a heroic raid on Edinburgh Castle.

4 BALVENIE CASTLE

A wide ditch encircles this striking, curtain-walled castle. On 22nd May 1308, Bruce defeated John Comyn, Earl of Buchan, in battle at Inverurie, 30 miles south-east of Balvenie Castle, after which he brutally stamped out the inhabitants of Buchan, which he 'burned from end to end and spared none'.





5

KINGDOM OF FIFE

DUNFERMLINE ABBEY

5 NAVE & PALACE

Some of Scotland's greatest medieval monarchs were laid to rest at Dunfermline Abbey Church. Robert the Bruce was buried here in 1329, though not before his heart was removed to be taken on Crusade. Near the end of his life, Bruce contributed funds for the rebuilding of the abbey buildings, which had been damaged during the Wars of Independence. A skeleton, which at the time was thought to be Bruce's, was found during construction of the new parish church in 1818 and his name is memorialised in the parapet of the 19th century church tower.

6 ST ANDREWS CATHEDRAL

The remains of Scotland's largest and most magnificent medieval church, St Andrews Cathedral is a prominent landmark. Bishop William Lamberton of St Andrews was the head of the Scottish church and one of Bruce's main allies; they were appointed joint Guardians of Scotland in 1298-9, together with Bruce's rival John Comyn. In 1309, Bruce held his first parliament at the cathedral, and on 5th July 1318 he attended the cathedral's consecration by Lamberton, which had been delayed by the Wars of Independence.

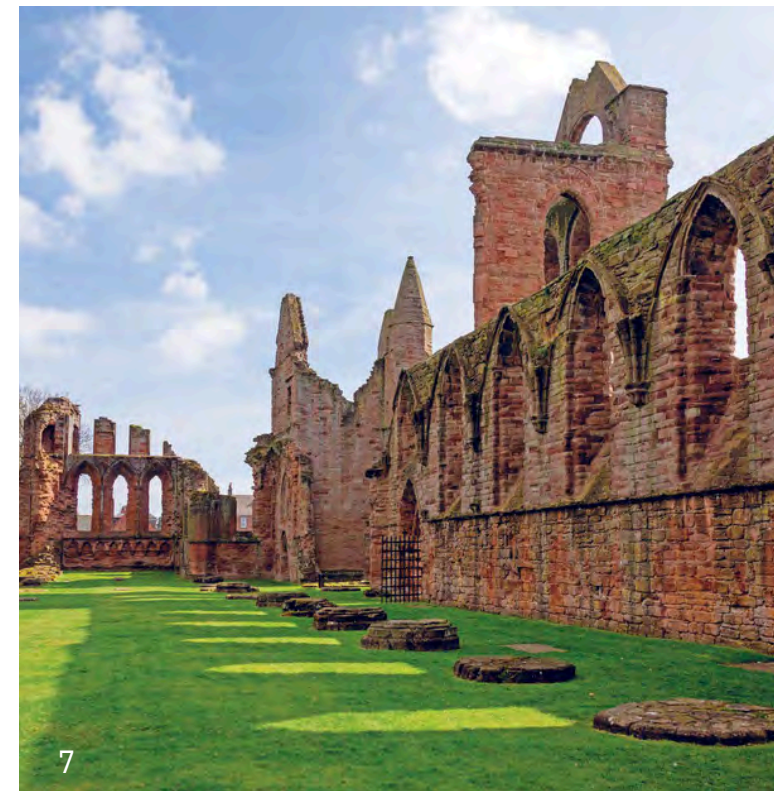


6

PERTHSHIRE, KINROSS & ANGUS

7 ARBROATH ABBEY

At Arbroath Abbey, explore the origins of the famous Declaration of Arbroath. Bruce is at the heart of the story of the Declaration, which was dispatched to the Pope from Arbroath in April 1320. 2020 marked the 700th anniversary of this important event in Scottish history, when Scottish nobles swore their independence from England.



7



8



9



10



11

GLASGOW, CLYDE & AYRSHIRE

8 [DUMBARTON CASTLE](#)

Dumbarton Castle stood at the heart of an ancient kingdom covering the area now known as Strathclyde. The castle was captured in 1296, during Edward I's first campaign in Scotland, but fell back into Scottish hands after Wallace and Moray's victory at Stirling Bridge in 1297. There is a myth that Dumbarton may possibly have been used to imprison William Wallace after his capture in 1305, but there is no evidence of this. Bruce died nearby in his manor at Cardross in 1329.

9 [GLASGOW CATHEDRAL](#)

Visit Glasgow Cathedral, the spot where Scotland's largest city first began to take shape. The Cathedral was the seat of Bruce's key ally, Bishop Robert Wishart, who helped arrange the lifting of his original excommunication.

10 [DUNDONALD CASTLE](#)

The second castle at Dundonald was destroyed around 1298, possibly by Bruce while Earl of Carrick. The castle's owner, Walter, the 6th High Steward, fought with Bruce at Bannockburn. He married Bruce's daughter Marjorie; their son became King Robert II, founder of the Stewart line, the UK's most enduring royal dynasty. Visit this mighty hilltop castle, which also stands on the site of Bronze and Iron Age remains.

11 [BOTHWELL CASTLE](#)

Hotly fought over during the Wars of Independence, Bothwell Castle was captured by Edward I in 1301, and remained in English hands until June 1314. In the aftermath of Bannockburn, many of Edward's senior knights took shelter here. Bruce sent his brother Edward Bruce here, where he captured some very valuable English prisoners.

CENTRAL & WEST

12 STIRLING CASTLE

Stirling is one of Scotland's greatest stone castles. Bruce would have been present at the siege of 1304, as an ally of Edward I. Stirling Castle was also besieged by Bruce's forces in May 1314 which led to the Battle of Bannockburn, a turning point in the Wars of Independence and in the fortunes of Bruce and his foe Edward II of England. The face of the statue of Bruce at nearby Bannockburn battlefield was modelled on the skull found at Dunfermline.



13 CAMBUSKENNETH ABBEY

During the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314, the disaffected Earl of Atholl led his men against the troops guarding the Scottish supply depot. Shortly after the battle, Bruce held a parliament at Cambuskenneth at which those Scots who had opposed him were stripped of their titles and estates, and he compelled landowners to choose between Scottish and English estates. Before this, many held lands on both sides of the Border, leading to divided loyalties. In 1326, another Cambuskenneth parliament agreed the royal line of succession to follow Robert, via his daughter Marjorie, which ultimately put the Stewart dynasty on the throne in 1371.



14 DUNSTAFFNAGE CASTLE

Dunstaffnage was the seat of the MacDougalls of Argyll. They sided with the Balliols during and after the Great Cause of 1290–1, which led to John Balliol being selected over Robert Bruce (Robert the Bruce's grandfather) as King. After seizing the throne in 1306, Bruce moved ruthlessly to eliminate his rivals and enemies. After wiping out the Comyns, largely in the north-east, he besieged Dunstaffnage in August 1308. After trapping MacDougall's forces at the Pass of Brander, Bruce pursued them to Dunstaffnage, which he besieged. Despite MacDougall's appeal to Edward II for assistance, the castle soon fell to Bruce.



15 IONA ABBEY

Take the foot ferry to Iona and step off onto one of Scotland's most sacred sites. Angus Og MacDonald, a follower of Bruce, is buried here.





EDINBURGH & LOTHIAN

EDINBURGH CASTLE 16

In March 1314, Bruce sent his nephew, Sir Thomas Randolph, Earl of Moray, to attack the castle. In a daring raid, Randolph and his men scaled the rock and captured the castle. Bruce then had most of it demolished to prevent it from being useful to the English. Discover more of this story in the 'Fight for the Castle' exhibition. 20th century statues of Bruce and Wallace guard the door at Edinburgh Castle.

16



Note. Book your tickets online in advance for the best price and to guarantee entry.

LINLITHGOW PALACE 17

Explore the magnificent ruins of Linlithgow Palace, where a royal manor once stood. Edward I made Linlithgow his base during his campaigns of 1296 and 1301, and expanded it in 1302-3. The site remained in English hands and, in 1310, Edward II spent a week at Linlithgow during one of his Scottish campaigns. It was recaptured by Bruce's followers in 1313. John Barbour's famous epic poem The Brus describes at length how a cattleman named Bunnock jammed the gates open with his cart and slew the porter with a single blow, allowing Bruce's troops to flood in and overwhelm the English garrison.

17



HOLYROOD ABBEY 18

Bruce held a parliament at Holyrood Abbey in 1328, at which the Treaty of Edinburgh was ratified. This recognised Bruce as rightful King of Scots, and brought a temporary halt to the Wars of Independence. Its terms also included a marriage between Bruce's son (later David II) and Edward III's sister Joan. Bruce stayed here during the parliament.

18

Note. Accessed in the grounds of the Palace of Holyroodhouse – tickets for the Palace must be purchased to visit. Explorer Passes do not include access to Holyrood Abbey

DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY

CAERLAVEROCK CASTLE 19

Besieged and captured by Edward I in 1300, Caerlaverock Castle remained in English hands until 1312 when the keeper Sir Eustace Maxwell changed his allegiance to Robert the Bruce. He was besieged by the English, but held out. In 1313, with the castle secured, Bruce ordered it to be demolished to prevent the English invaders from using it. You can now explore this unique triangular wide-moated castle.



19

SCOTTISH BORDERS

MELROSE ABBEY 20

Discover a place so beloved by Robert the Bruce, he chose it as the final resting place for his heart. In 1302, Bruce wrote to Melrose Abbey to apologise for attempting to press its tenants into battle against the English. His heart was buried here after being taken on crusade by his loyal ally Sir James Douglas, which was his dying wish.



20

Go behind the scenes and visit the filming locations that brought Outlaw King to life.

Available on

NETFLIX



1 Blackness Castle
Postcode EH49 7NH

Known as 'the ship that never sailed', Blackness becomes Yorkshire Castle.



2 Craigmillar Castle
Postcode EH16 4SY

Edinburgh's 'other castle' stars as Bruce's castle and village.



3 Linlithgow Palace
Postcode EH49 7AL

A superb Renaissance residence, Linlithgow plays Bruce's castle chapel.



4 Doune Castle
Postcode FK16 6EA

Popular filming location Doune becomes Douglas castle and church.



5 Dunfermline Abbey
Postcode KY12 7PE

The place where medieval monarchs were laid to rest plays Westminster.



6 Glasgow Cathedral

Postcode G4 0QZ
This awe-inspiring building becomes Greyfriar's Cathedral and the Lord's Hall.





[historicenvironment.scot](https://www.historicenvironment.scot)



Historic Environment Scotland
Scottish Charity No. SC045925

For opening times,
prices and more
information on each
site, please visit
[historicenvironment.scot/visit-a-place](https://www.historicenvironment.scot/visit-a-place)



© Historic Environment Scotland 2024