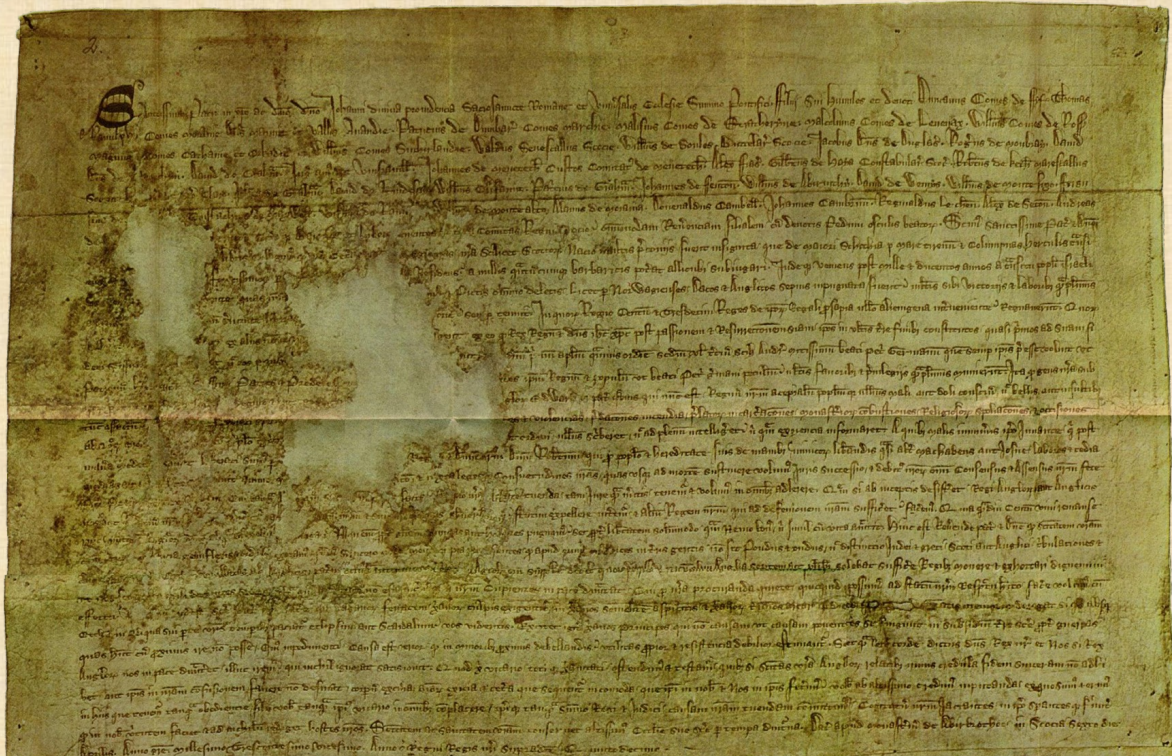


# The Arbroath Chronicle

Newsletter of the Order of the  
First Scottish War of Independence, 1296-1320



# Indices Capitulum



Spring 2026

## Welcome, One and All

President's Message .....	2
Herald's Message .....	3
Officers of the Order .....	4

## Brief Introductions to Historic Figures and Events

Braveheart: Hollywood Myth vs. Scottish History .....	5
The Stone of Scone: Scotland's Enduring Symbol of Sovereignty .....	9
"For So Long as But One Hundred Remain" The Declaration of Arbroath and Scotland's Case for Freedom.....	11

## Ancestor Spotlight

Sir Marmaduke Thweng.....	15
Sir William, Third Earl of Ross.....	17

## Genealogy

Genealogist's Corner .....	19
----------------------------	----

## In the Scriptorium

Book & Website Reviews .....	20
------------------------------	----

## Where Steel Did Clash

The Battle of Stirling Bridge – Scotland Strikes Back.....	21
--	----

## Chaplain's Message

A Prayer for Our Order .....	24
------------------------------	----

## Among Our Ranks

Membership Information .....	25
------------------------------	----

## The Final Word

Projects, Opportunities & Upcoming Meetings .....	27
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# President's Message



Greetings,

It's hard to believe our Society has been in existence for a year! Our membership is growing, and Alex Bannerman is constantly adding ancestors to the various battles that have been fought in the name of Scottish independence. Please make sure you check out our website. I'm sure you will find some ancestors for whom you can do supplements.

Our second annual meeting is also coming up. June 22, 2026, is the magical day, and Cary Stone-Greenstein is presenting a program on the "First Scottish Wars of Independence – Myths, Legends and a Little History." The meeting will be held on Zoom at 7 p.m., Central Time. The link will be sent out as the date approaches. I hope you will tune in!

A little bit of history: As we know, the Declaration of Arbroath was designed to persuade the pope to accept Scottish independence and end Robert the Bruce's excommunication for the murder of the Red Comyn in a church in 1306. A passage within the Declaration says, "For so long as but a hundred of us remain alive, we will in no way yield ourselves to the dominion of the English. For it is not for glory, nor riches, nor honour that we fight, but for Freedom only, which no good man lays down but with his life." The Declaration was signed on April 6, 1320. In the United States, April 6 is known as Tartan Day. So, mark your calendars and remember to wear your tartan on April 6 next!

*Sunny Hayes, President*





SPRING 2026

Dear Members and Friends of the Order,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to this second issue of *The Arbroath Chronicle*, wherein we continue our exploration of the remarkable people, symbols, and struggles that shaped the First Scottish War of Independence.

This issue opens with a reflection on one of the most enduring influences on popular understanding of Scottish history: the film *Braveheart*. In “Hollywood Myth vs. Scottish History,” we consider where legend and cinema have stirred admiration for William Wallace, while also distinguishing the romance of the screen from the rich and often more compelling truths of history itself.

From there, we turn to one of Scotland’s most revered symbols of sovereignty, the Stone of Scone, whose story intertwines monarchy, identity, and nationhood. We then examine one of medieval Europe’s great statements of political principle in our feature on the Declaration of Arbroath, that stirring assertion of liberty whose words still resonate across the centuries and likely influenced our own nation’s yearning for liberty.

This issue also shines a light on two notable figures whose lives illuminate the complexity of the age. In our Ancestor Spotlight, we consider Sir Marmaduke Thweng, remembered for valor and honor amid war, and Sir William II, Third Earl of Ross, a baron who affixed his seal to the Declaration of Arbroath, despite shifting loyalties through the turbulent realities of Scotland’s struggle.

We then turn to the Battle of Stirling Bridge, where strategy, terrain, and courage combined to produce one of the most astonishing victories of the war and secured William Wallace a place in history.

Taken together, these pages remind us that the War of Independence was shaped not only by kings and battles, but by symbols, ideas, and individuals whose legacy endures. May this issue inform, inspire, and deepen our appreciation for the history we seek to preserve.

Yours in fellowship and heritage,

Joshua Tuck, Herald



**PRESIDENT:** Sonja “Sunny” J. Hayes – Sir William, 3rd Earl of Ross, via gateway ancestor Maria Duncanson of NY.

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# Braveheart

## Hollywood Myth vs. Scottish History

(A Belated Movie Review)

By Cary Stone-Greenstein

Few films have done more to shape popular perceptions of medieval Scotland than *Braveheart* (1995). Sweeping, dramatic, and undeniably entertaining, the film won five Academy Awards and inspired generations of viewers with its portrayal of Sir William Wallace as Scotland's great freedom champion. Yet from a historian's perspective, the film has earned a different distinction: in 2009, the *London Sunday Times* ranked it second in its "Desecration of History" category. That judgment, while severe, is understandable.

Movie Wallace - as seen in *Braveheart* - has many historical inaccuracies, not to mention Mel Gibson's bizarre accent. Much of the plot relies on sources produced hundreds of years after his death – and the cinematic instincts of its creators – and it is wrong not just as to facts about Wallace himself, but also as to general Scottish culture and history in his time.

Most of the plot in *Braveheart* cheerfully ignores what little we actually do know about Sir William Wallace, preferring historical fiction with a big side of extra cheese. The film generously supplies Wallace with anachronistic, feel-good, 20th-century motivations—like he's auditioning for the role of Scotland's first democratically elected president. Plus, let's not forget that Scotland had not been living under English rule for many years. It had been fully independent since the Picts fought off Julius Caesar in 54-55 BC until 1296, when Edward I crash-landed at the border with his "England, Now with More Scotland Added!" campaign.



**Mel Gibson as William Wallace  
in *Braveheart* (1995)**

In the public domain at  
<https://allthatsinteresting.com/is-braveheart-a-true-story>



**William Wallace**

By 11th Earl of Buchan, David Stuart Erskine, In  
the Public Domain at:  
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=158725408>

While Wallace may have been fueled by righteous fury, he didn't go full action hero and take down entire English armies single handedly (as tempting as that might be to believe after a popcorn-fueled movie night). In truth, he led the Scots to only one major victory—so, less “unstoppable legend,” and more “one-hit wonder.” And speaking of that one hit, which was the Battle of Stirling Bridge - the movie completely skips the actual bridge...maybe because it couldn't find its best camera angle or union card? Instead, you get epic muddy fields, but not a single plank in sight.



William Wallace as portrayed by Mel Gibson in *Braveheart* (1995)

Then there's the matter of all of those blue-painted faces. Legend has it the Picts, ancestors of the Scots, loved a good splash of woad before heading into battle. They were called “Picti” (literally Latin for “painted ones”) by Julius Caesar (54 BC) who said they “dye themselves with “vitrum,” which produces a blue color, and makes their appearance in battle more terrible.” But was it really woad? Scholars are still arguing about what “vitrum” really meant, but whatever it was, by Wallace's time, blue paint was so last millennium. If Wallace had shown up painted blue, people might have assumed he was deathly ill from too much haggis - or was lost on his way to a Blue Man festival.

The fashion *faux pas* continues. In the movie, everyone is strutting around in tartans and kilts. But in reality, that famous Scottish garb didn't show up until about 300 years later, in the late 1500s. The great kilt—basically the original “one-size-fits-all” pleated wrap—was centuries away.

Back in Wallace's day, Scotsmen (and Scotswomen, for that matter) wore practical, universally unremarkable outfits similar to all of their northern European neighbors: a tunic (called a “leine” in Gaelic), an undertunic for men or kirtle for the ladies, and a pair of delightfully baggy “braies” for everyone, which would make even modern sweatpants jealous. Leg warmers—sorry, “hose”—were an optional accessory, but no one was belting their cloaks with flair just yet. If you could time-travel back, you'd see a lot of comfy, cozy, completely untartaned folks.

## Medieval Scotland 1100-1600 CE

Scots Dress the Same as all Northern Europe



### Common Dress of Medieval Scotland

Created by the author

To drive home the point, the famous Wallace tartan—a stylish red-and-black check—has nothing to do with medieval Scotland. In fact, it didn't debut until 1842. It is said to have been inspired by the Rob Roy tartan (Rob Roy being Scotland's later celebrity bad boy, born in 1671). So, the next time you see an image of Wallace rocking that iconic pattern, remember he's just ahead of his time in both fashion and film.

Even in his “one hit” victory, the real Wallace did not single-handedly defeat the English. In fact, he was one of two leaders in “his” one great victory at the Battle of Stirling Bridge on 11 September 1297. He is just the only leader who gets historical credit. After the battle he and his co-leader, Andrew Moray, both assumed the title of Guardians of the Kingdom of Scotland on behalf of King John Balliol. Moray died of wounds suffered at the Sterling Bridge battle later in 1297. Wallace's leadership role lasted only until his catastrophic loss at the battle of Falkirk, less than a year later.



### The Royal Stewart Tartan:

One of Scotland's most widely recognized setts, created in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Errors are too numerous to list in full, but another whopper occurred as *Braveheart* suggests that Wallace had a liaison with Isabella of France, then the wife of King Edward II, soon after the battle of Falkirk. It has her imply that he was the father of her son who later became King Edward III. In fact, Isabella (born about 1295, would have been about two years old and still living in France at the time of Falkirk. She was not married to Edward II until 1308, and Edward III was born in 1312, seven years after Wallace's execution in 1305. That would have been some gestation!

Randall Wallace, who wrote the screenplay, has acknowledged Blind Harry's 15th-century epic poem, *The Acts and Deeds of Sir William Wallace, Knight of Elderslie*, as a major inspiration for the film. However, there are some completely made-up incidents in the film that are based on neither history nor Blind Harry. Although the reign of King Edward I of England is among the best documented in the Middle Ages, the screenwriter and director ignored those sources in favor of more action scenes.

In the DVD audio commentary of *Braveheart*, Mel Gibson acknowledged the historical inaccuracies but defended his choices as director, noting that the way events were portrayed in the film was much more "cinematically compelling" than the historical fact or conventional mythos. So as one reviewer wrote, "The events aren't accurate, the dates aren't accurate, the characters aren't accurate, the names aren't accurate, the clothes aren't accurate—in short, just about nothing is accurate."

In summary, the well-deserved historical inaccuracy award from the Times said, "Not only was the Scottish hero William Wallace gruesomely executed in 1305, having been captured by the English at Falkirk, but seven centuries later his memory was exhumed, smeared with blue face paint and mutilated by Mel Gibson." Wallace was not the poor villager the film depicts, but a landowner and minor knight. The litany of fibs extends from Wallace's love interest (Queen Isabella would have been about two years old at the time) to his kilt – a garment not developed for another three centuries. The historian Sharon L. Krossa likens it to "a film about Colonial America showing the colonial men wearing 20th-century business suits."

(The errors continued even within this description, as Wallace was actually betrayed and captured near Glasgow in 1305, several years after the July 1298 battle he lost at Falkirk.)

In fairness to the movie, although it is not at all historically accurate, it *is* entertaining - and while the story is completely wrong, it is well told. Movie reviewer Roger Ebert said:

"Gibson is not filming history here, but myth. William Wallace may have been a real person, but *Braveheart* owes more to Prince Valiant, Rob Roy and Mad Max. Once we understand that this is not a solemn historical reconstruction (and that happens pretty fast), we accept dialogue that might otherwise have an uncannily modern tone, as when *Braveheart* issues his victory ultimatum to the English; 'Scotland's terms are that your commander present himself in front of our army, put his head between his legs and kiss his \_\_ \_\_.' "Uh huh."



**National Wallace Monument, Stirling, Scotland**  
In the public domain at  
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=28511569>

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# The Stone of Scone: Scotland's Enduring Symbol of Sovereignty

By Joshua Tuck



**Coronation Chair with Stone of Scone**  
Westminster Abbey. Getty Images. In the public  
domain at <https://www.elle.com/uk/life-and-culture/a43156132/stone-of-destiny/>

## The Stone of Destiny

Among the treasures of Scottish history, few objects carry greater symbolism than the Stone of Scone, also known as the Stone of Destiny. Though modest in appearance, this ancient block of sandstone has for centuries been linked to kingship, national identity, and Scotland's enduring struggle for independence.

For generations, Scottish kings were traditionally inaugurated upon the Stone at Scone Abbey, near Perth. In medieval thought, kingship was not simply inherited; it was sanctified. The Stone represented that sacred bond between ruler, realm, and people.

Legend gave the Stone even grander origins. Chroniclers claimed it was the biblical stone associated with Jacob, brought eventually from the Holy Land through Ireland into Scotland. Modern geology, however, strongly suggests the Stone is native to Scotland and likely quarried near Scone itself. Yet whether relic or legend, its power has always rested in what it has symbolized for the people of Scotland.

When Edward I invaded Scotland in 1296, he seized the Stone and carried it to Westminster Abbey, where he had it placed beneath the Coronation Chair. It was a deliberate act of domination; English monarchs would be crowned over a captured symbol of Scottish kingship.

For Scots, the loss was profound. When Robert the Bruce was crowned in 1306, the Stone was absent, (already in English hands), making his coronation triumphant but symbolically incomplete. Even after their victory at Bannockburn secured Scotland's freedom, the Stone remained in Westminster.

Its symbolic force only deepened over time. In 1950, Scottish students famously removed the Stone from Westminster Abbey and returned it briefly to Scotland, reigniting national interest in its fate. Then, in 1996, seven centuries after its removal, the Stone was formally returned to Scotland and placed in Edinburgh Castle.



Today it stands not merely as a relic of monarchy, but as a symbol of continuity—of a people whose identity outlived conquest. For descendants of Scotland's past, the Stone of Scone is more than history carved in sandstone. It is the enduring seat of memory.

#### **Stone of Destiny Brought to Westminster Abbey For King Charles' III Coronation (2023)**

Reuters. In the public domain at

<https://www.news18.com/world/stone-of-scone-historic-symbol-of-scottish-monarchy-readied-for-charles-coronation-7695655.html>

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# “For So Long as But One Hundred Remain” The Declaration of Arbroath and Scotland’s Case for Freedom

By Joshua Tuck



Tynninghame Copy of the Declaration of Arbroath (1320).  
National Archives of Scotland. In the public domain at  
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=7392964>

## Scotland’s Declaration of Freedom

On April 6, 1320, in the abbey of Arbroath, Scottish nobles affixed their seals to a letter destined for Pope John XXII. While it was written to persuade the pope to adopt the Scottish cause, it would go on to become a defining document of the Scottish nation. Known today as the Declaration of Arbroath, this 706-year-old document remains one of the most celebrated statements of liberty in medieval history and one of the enduring monuments of Scotland’s long struggle for independence.

## A Kingdom Under Threat

To understand the Declaration, one must return to the desperate years after the victories of Robert the Bruce. Bruce had won his crown in 1306 and stunned the world at the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314, yet military triumph alone did not guarantee peace. Scotland remained diplomatically vulnerable. England still pressed its claims, and Bruce, who was excommunicated after the killing of John Comyn, needed papal recognition to secure his legitimacy. As such, the Declaration was part diplomacy, part political argument, and part national manifesto. Addressed to Pope John XXII, it asked the pope to recognize Scotland’s independence, press England to cease its aggression, and restore Robert Bruce to the favor of the Church.

## **“It Is in Truth Not for Glory...”**

The Declaration famously argues that:

“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.”

“...for so long as but one hundred of us remain alive, never will we on any conditions be brought under English rule.”

It was a declaration that the realm existed not simply for the king, but rather that kingship itself rested upon the freedom of the people. To drive this point home, the nobles asserted that if Bruce ever betrayed Scotland’s liberty:

“...we should exert ourselves... once to drive him out as our enemy...”

This was a revolutionary idea in 1320, announcing that a king held his power conditionally. Sovereignty would now reside in the community. For many historians, these ideas place Arbroath among the great antecedents of later constitutional thought.

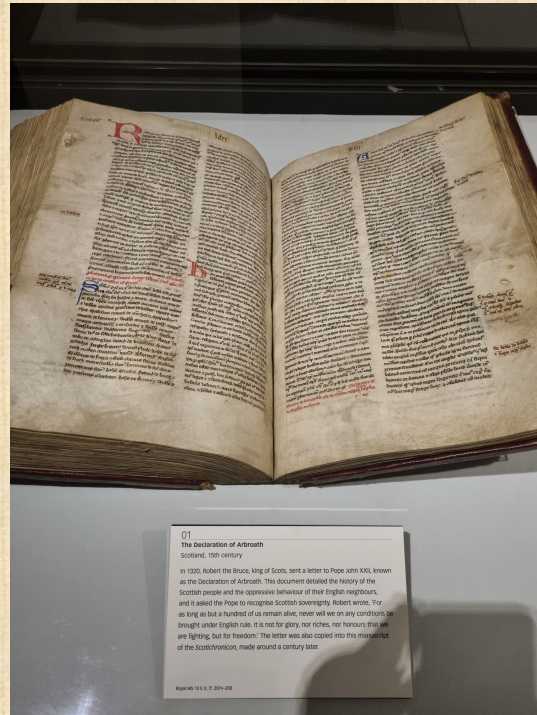
### **The “Signers”**

The letter was composed in the name of the “barons and freeholders of the realm of Scotland,” and thirty-eight nobles attached their seals. Though often called “signers,” technically most attached seals to a letter likely drafted by the learned clerics of the chancery, frequently associated with Bernard of Kilwinning, Abbot of Arbroath and Bruce’s chancellor.

### **Impact of the Declaration**

The immediate purpose of the letter was successful. In time, papal and diplomatic pressure helped move Scotland toward the Treaty of Edinburgh-Northampton (1328), in which England recognized Scotland’s independence and Bruce as its lawful king. Arbroath’s legacy, however, far outlived its diplomacy, and the document would become a touchstone of Scottish identity. Some have even suggested that its political ideas foreshadowed principles later echoed in the American Declaration of Independence.

Whether or not direct influence can be proved, the kinship of spirit is unmistakable.



### **The Declaration of Arbroath included in the *Scotichronicon*.**

British Library. In the public domain at <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=110861188>

## Enduring Legacy

The Declaration of Arbroath is often remembered as a statement of nationalism, although in truth it is much more than that. It is a declaration that a people, not conquest, make a kingdom. It reinforced the concept that Liberty can justify armed resistance, and that rulers should serve the common realm. These were profound ideas in 1320, and they remain so today.

Perhaps that is why every April, Scots and their descendants still look back to Arbroath, not merely as history, but as their proud inheritance. For those who honor the age of Bruce and the First War of Independence, few anniversaries speak more powerfully. Seven hundred years after Bannockburn, the Stone of Destiny, and the long struggle for nationhood...the voice of Arbroath still speaks as loudly today as the day it was drafted.

## Echoes Across the Atlantic? Arbroath and American Independence

As Americans celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, we should consider whether the Declaration of Arbroath helped inspire our nation's defining document of liberty.

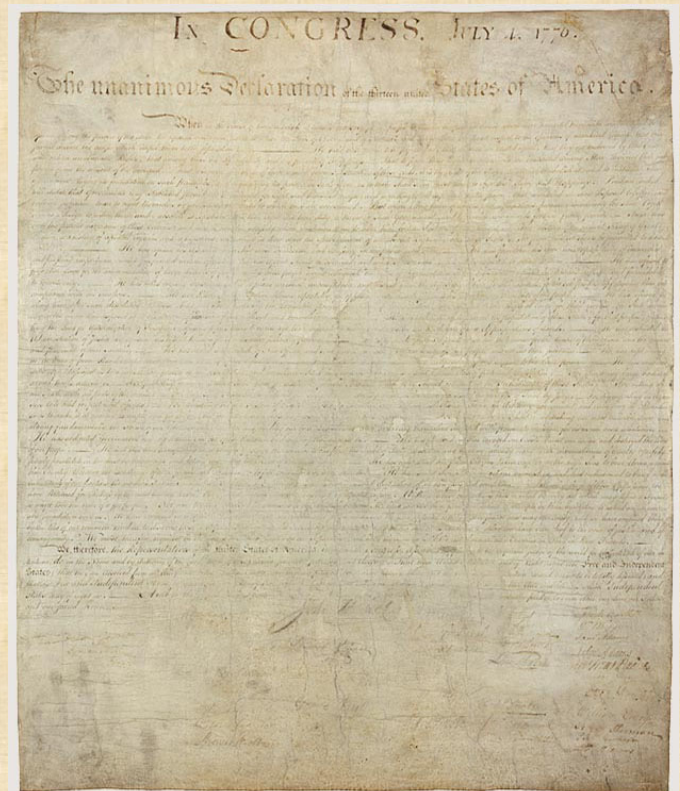
Historians debate whether the framers of the American Declaration knew Arbroath well enough to claim direct borrowing of the document. Definitive proof is elusive; yet the parallels are compelling.

In 1320, the Scottish barons declared kings existed to defend the freedom of the realm. If a king failed in that sacred trust, he could be resisted or even removed.

In 1776, the American colonists declared governments derive "their just powers from the consent of the governed," and when destructive of liberty, "it is the Right of the People to alter or abolish" them.

Separated by more than four centuries, both documents rest on a remarkable shared principle: Political authority exists for the people, not the other way around.

The famous Arbroath passage, "It is in truth not for glory... but for freedom alone..." has often invited comparison with the American cause.



**The Declaration of Independence**  
National Archives. In the public domain at  
<https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript>

The Scottish Enlightenment movement deeply shaped the intellectual world of the Founding era. Many Americans of Scottish and Scots-Irish descent carried with them traditions steeped in covenant, resistance, and constitutional liberty. Political theories from influential thought-leaders of the era, such as the famous Scottish philosopher David Hume, were well known and widely embraced by many of the founding fathers. It is not a stretch to presume that Hume's theories of a representative government "of the people" were at least in part influenced by his own Scottish upbringing and understanding of his native nation's history.

It is perhaps no surprise that in modern times the U.S. Senate formally recognized the Declaration of Arbroath in a 1998 resolution and designated April 6 as National Tartan Day, honoring the contributions of Scottish Americans and consciously linking Arbroath's legacy with American ideals.

Perhaps the safest conclusion is also the most compelling: If Arbroath did not father the American Declaration, it was surely one of liberty's great early ancestors. And that is kinship enough.

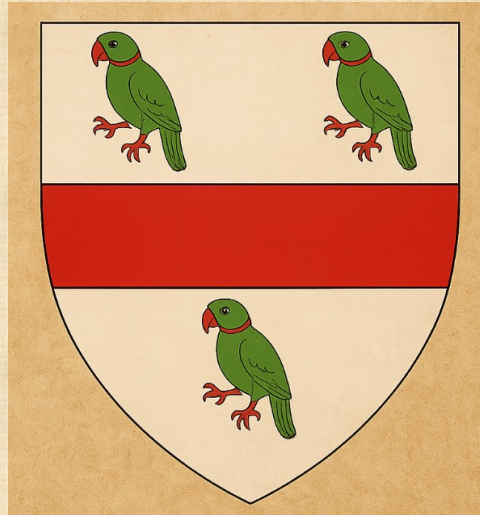


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# Ancestor Spotlight: Sir Marmaduke Thweng

By Joshua Tuck



## Thweng's Coat of Arms

On an argent field, a fess of gules between three popinjays.  
Current Coat of the Earl of Scarbrough

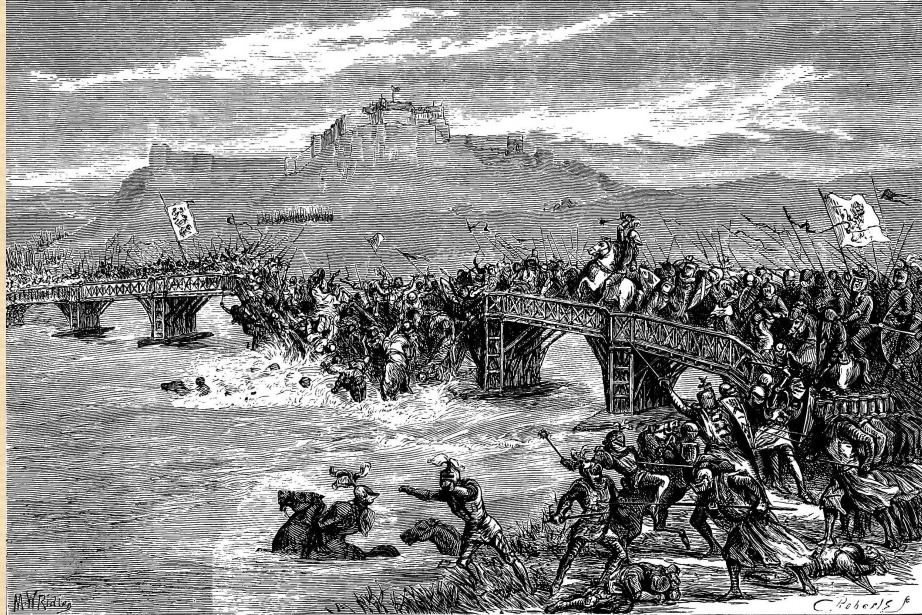
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=16924691>

Sir Marmaduke Thweng (c. 1270 - c. 1323), was a knight of Anglo-Norman descent from Yorkshire who distinguished himself in two of the most critical battles of the First Scottish War of Independence: Stirling Bridge (1297) and Bannockburn (1314). Though aligned with the English Crown, Thweng's reputation among friend and foe alike was that of chivalry, courage, and grace in defeat.

At the Battle of Stirling Bridge, Thweng was one of the few English commanders to escape the disastrous defeat orchestrated by William Wallace and Andrew Moray. Fighting alongside his brother and nephew, Thweng managed to retreat across the river amid the chaos. This act earned him both criticism and admiration.

Nearly two decades later, Thweng fought again at the Battle of Bannockburn, one of the most decisive victories for Robert the Bruce. Trapped and surrounded on the second day of battle, Thweng chose an extraordinary path: rather than continue fighting or fleeing, he rode directly to Bruce himself and surrendered. The Scottish king, moved by Thweng's bravery and nobility, reportedly welcomed him as a guest and allowed him to return home unharmed after dining with him later that day.

This act of battlefield honor has become a symbol of the chivalric values often idealized in medieval warfare – a rare moment where enemies recognized valor beyond bloodshed. Thweng's name lives on as one of the few English knights remembered with respect in Scottish history.



### **Battle of Stirling Bridge (1297)**

By Matthew White Ridley - C Hanley, History Of Scotland, In the public domain at <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=17618334>

Sir Marmaduke Thweng is my qualifying ancestor for the Order of the First Scottish War of Independence, 1296-1320. Members are encouraged to research their own noteworthy ancestor and submit a brief (1-2 page) biography of his life and deeds for inclusion in the newsletter. Submissions should be sent in Word format to: [jtuck9048@gmail.com](mailto:jtuck9048@gmail.com).

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# Ancestor Spotlight: Sir William II, Earl of Ross

By Sunny Hayes



Seal of William II, Earl of Ross

In the public domain

at <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Ross-557>

Among the great magnates who helped shape Scotland during the Wars of Independence, Sir William II, Earl of Ross, deserves remembrance. Though often overshadowed by more celebrated names such as William Wallace and Robert the Bruce, the Earl of Ross stood at the center of the turbulent politics of medieval Scotland, where loyalty, survival, and ambition were rarely simple matters.

As lord of the powerful earldom of Ross in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, William ruled a strategic northern region where Gaelic, Norse, and royal influences intersected. The Earls of Ross were among the most influential nobles in the Highlands, often acting with a degree of independence that reflected the realities of medieval Scottish lordship.

Following the death of King Alexander III of Scotland in 1286 and the succession crisis that followed, William was drawn into the struggle between Scotland and King Edward I of England. During these uncertain years, allegiances shifted, often less from betrayal than from political necessity. William's name is most often remembered in connection with one dramatic and controversial episode.

After Bruce's coronation in 1306, when his cause appeared near collapse, members of his family sought refuge in the north. Among them were his queen, Elizabeth de Burgh, his daughter Marjorie, and other female supporters. They were captured and delivered into English hands, and this act was long associated with the Earl of Ross.

To later generations, this cast Ross in a dark light. Yet the politics of the time were anything but straightforward. In 1306, Bruce was still an uncertain claimant and not yet the victor of the Battle of Bannockburn. Many nobles were making calculations shaped as much by survival as by principle.

As Bruce's fortunes rose, Ross ultimately submitted to the Scottish king and was reconciled to the Bruce cause. The alliance was strengthened when William's son and heir, Hugh, married Bruce's daughter Maud. William would go on to become an ardent supporter of the Scottish push for independence and was one of the eight earls whose names appear on the Declaration of Arbroath of 1320.

By the time William died in 1323, he had witnessed Scotland move from occupation and civil strife toward restored independence.

Not every figure in the Wars of Independence was hero or villain. Some, like Ross, were complex men navigating dangerous times. His story reminds us that Scotland's freedom was shaped not only by famous kings and battlefield legends, but by regional lords whose difficult choices helped determine the kingdom's fate.

William II, Earl of Ross is the qualifying ancestor of the Order's President, Sonja "Sunny" J. Hayes, via her gateway ancestor Maria Duncanson of NY.



**Bust of William at the Tain and District Museum, Scotland**

In the public domain at:

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=1834028>

## References & Further Reading

- People of Medieval Scotland (University of Glasgow / King's College London) William II, Earl of Ross: <https://www.poms.ac.uk>
- The Peerage – William II, Earl of Ross: <https://www.thepeerage.com>
- Electric Scotland – Earls of Ross: <https://electricScotland.com/history/nation/ross.htm>
- Undiscovered Scotland – Robert the Bruce (background on Bruce family capture and wars) <https://www.undiscoveredScotland.co.uk/usbiography/b/robertthebruce.html>
- Encyclopaedia Britannica – Robert the Bruce: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Robert-the-Bruce-king-of-Scotland>
- Historic Environment Scotland – The Wars of Independence: <https://www.historicenvironment.scot>

# Genealogist's Corner



Latha math dhuibh!

Following up on the (hopefully helpful) pointers in my previous installment of this column, I encourage all members to regularly visit our website. The address can be found elsewhere in this newsletter. In case you are not aware, our website now contains individual buttons for each battle, skirmish, and siege recognized by the Order. Each treatment contains names and useful information, including citation to authoritative works, to assist members and prospective members in determining what ancestors they may have who participated in one or more events on which our Order focuses. As one can imagine, these lists continue to be a work in progress, and each time I turn to review of applications, I also try to focus some time on enlarging those lists. Remember, though, that the lists are not all inclusive, and you may discover an ancestor who is not shown presently. When such discoveries are made and submitted, I always add them to our lists. Also, each time I complete application review for our Order, I make a point of uploading the new lists in order to keep the page growing.

Remember that many of our ancestors engaged in battle in more than one event. Though supplementary applications are chiefly based on different ancestors, don't forget we also offer a certificate supplemental at a greatly reduced price. Many members want to identify ancestors who fought in as many of the battles, skirmishes, and sieges as possible, and our certificate supplementals enable one to do this without incurring great expense and without having to re-document their lineage. If you would like to submit a certificate supplemental application, I will be glad to provide you with the appropriate form. It's only one page, and the instructions explain the uncomplicated process and the small fee for submission.

Finally, be sure to tell your lineage society friends about us. Pretty much anyone who has a Gateway Ancestor is likely to find at least one ancestor who served in at least one of the First Scottish War events.

Happy researching, and as always, I wish you good luck for enormous success in discovering even more of your gateway ancestry.

Ann an càirdeas,

Alex Bannerman, Genealogist

# In the Scriptorium



## Recommended Readings & Online Resources

### Book Recommendations

**1. Penman, Michael. *Robert the Bruce: King of the Scots*.**

Yale University Press, 2014.

A masterful modern study of Bruce that blends military, political, and personal history, offering one of the finest single-volume treatments of Scotland's warrior king.

**2. Brown, Michael. *The Wars of Scotland, 1214–1371*.**

Edinburgh University Press, 2004.

A sweeping and highly readable account placing the Wars of Independence within the broader transformation of medieval Scotland, with excellent treatment of Bruce, Balliol, and the great magnates.



### Online Resources

**1. People of Medieval Scotland, 1093–1371 (POMS)**

<https://www.poms.ac.uk>

A remarkable scholarly database of charters and biographical records, invaluable for researching nobles, clergy, kinship networks, and individuals from the age of Wallace and Bruce.

**2. Historic Environment Scotland**

<https://www.historicenvironment.scot>

Explore castles, abbeys, battlefields, and archaeological sites tied to the First War of Independence, with excellent historical essays and visitor resources.

# Where Steel Did Clash

## The Battle of Stirling Bridge

Scotland Strikes Back

September 11, 1297

On September 11, 1297, beside the narrow wooden bridge spanning the River Forth near Stirling, an outnumbered Scottish force delivered one of the most astonishing victories in medieval warfare. It was a battle of terrain, timing, and audacity that would help change the course of a kingdom.

The Battle of Stirling Bridge was more than a military triumph. It announced to Europe that Scotland would resist English conquest and had the capability to defeat any army standing in the way of its freedom.

### Scotland in Revolt

The year before, Edward I had invaded Scotland, deposed King John Balliol, seized the Stone of Scone, and attempted to reduce Scotland to a conquered province. However, this conquest provoked further rebellion.

Across the kingdom resistance flared, and two leaders emerged: William Wallace in the south and Andrew Moray in the north.

Together they gathered a force of common spearmen, lesser knights, and local levies to challenge England's military machine.

### The Narrow Bridge

In September 1297, English forces under John de Warenne, Earl of Surrey, and his advisor Hugh de Cressingham approached Stirling, which was the strategic and geographic gateway to northern Scotland.

The English army may have numbered several thousand infantry and hundreds of mounted knights, heavily armed and battle-tested. The Scots had perhaps half as many. However, Wallace and Moray held the ground in advance of the battle, and this would prove to be the advantage that mattered most.



**Statue of William Wallace  
Aberdeen, Scotland**

In the public domain at  
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=2724553>



**Present Day Stirling Bridge**

In the public domain at  
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=2316827>

The crossing at Stirling was a narrow wooden bridge, likely allowing only a few horsemen abreast. As the English began crossing, the Scots waited for their opportunity and then struck a horrible and swift blow.

When enough English troops had crossed, but before the rest could support them, the Scots charged. Their forces crashed into isolated English infantry and cavalry trapped between river and marsh. English panic was followed by slaughter, and the bridge became a death trap. Many English were driven into the Forth, while others were cut down where they stood. The English army finally broke, and Scotland won the day.

### **The Rise of William Wallace**

The victory electrified the realm, and William Wallace emerged as a national hero and was later named Guardian of Scotland in the name of King John Balliol. However, Stirling was not his victory alone.

Modern historians rightly emphasize the often-overlooked role of Andrew Moray, whose military skill may have been equal to Wallace's. Mortally wounded in the battle or shortly thereafter, Moray did not live to share in its subsequent fame; yet Stirling Bridge was in many ways as much Moray's triumph as Wallace's. Together they had done what had heretofore seemed impossible: defeated King Edward's army in open war.

### **Why Stirling Mattered**

The significance of the Scottish victory at Stirling Bridge cannot be overstated. Not only did it prove that the mighty English arms could be beaten, but it also elevated William Wallace into legend. It also offers a tactical lesson that has repeated itself countless times throughout the history of warfare: terrain matters as much or more than numbers alone. Indeed, many historians rank Stirling Bridge among the great medieval examples of a smaller army defeating a stronger foe through disciplined use of advantageous ground and timing. Though defeat would come at the Battle of Falkirk the following year, the victory at Stirling Bridge proved that resistance was possible and revamped Scotland's resolve.

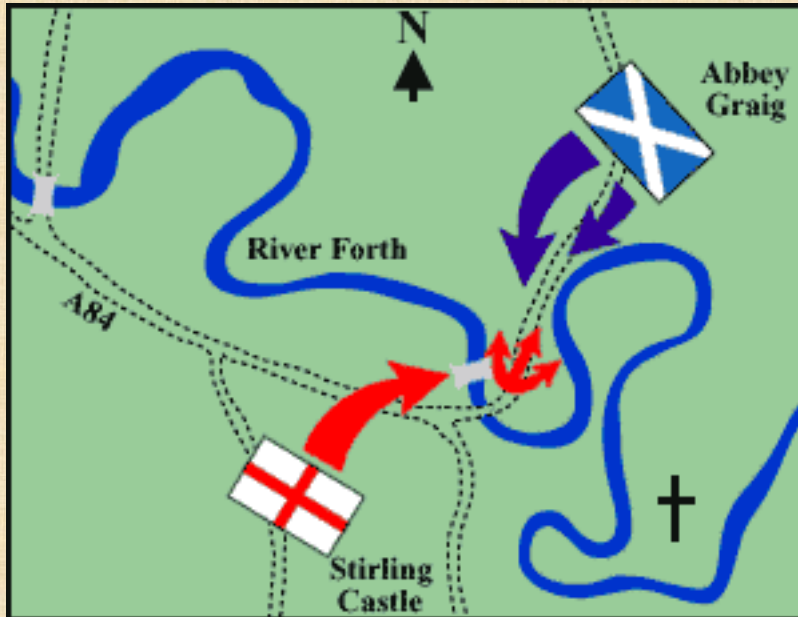


**Battle of Stirling Bridge**

In the public domain at <https://great-castles.com/battleofstirlingbridge.html>

## Legacy

Today the fields around Stirling still echo with memory. Nearby, the National Wallace Monument rises over ground where a people once defied the English empire. At Stirling Bridge, Scotland did more than win a battle; it reclaimed its belief that liberty was possible.



### Battle of Stirling Bridge - Combatant Movements

In the public domain at

[https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/scottishhistory/independence/trailsindependence\\_stirlingbridge.shtml](https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/scottishhistory/independence/trailsindependence_stirlingbridge.shtml)

## References & Further Reading

- National Trust for Scotland — Battle of Stirling Bridge  
<https://www.nts.org.uk/stories/the-battle-of-stirling-bridge>
- Historic Environment Scotland — Stirling Bridge and Wallace  
<https://www.historicenvironment.scot>
- National Wallace Monument  
<https://www.nationalwallacemonument.com>
- Undiscovered Scotland — Battle of Stirling Bridge  
<https://www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk/ushistory/wallace/stirlingbridge>
- Encyclopaedia Britannica — William Wallace / Stirling Bridge  
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/William-Wallace>

## The Chaplain's Message



### Invocation for Our Order

Keep, we beseech Thee, O Lord,  
our Nation and this honorable Order  
under Thy gracious favor;

Strengthen the bonds of fellowship among us,  
prosper the labors of our hands,  
and preserve in us faithful remembrance  
of those forebears who contended for liberty and right.

Grant us stout hearts in duty,  
wisdom in counsel,  
and steadfastness in all noble purpose.

As Thou didst uphold the realm of Scotland  
in days of trial and war,  
so continue Thy blessing upon this Order,  
that it may flourish in honor, brotherhood, and service  
through all generations.

And this we humbly ask  
through Thy mercy and providence.

Amen.

Lance Rose, Chaplain

# Among Our Ranks



## Join Our Order

**THE FIRST SCOTTISH WAR OF INDEPENDENCE** ran from 1296 through 1328, being closed by the Treaty of Edinburgh-Northampton in the latter year. The battles identified all occurred between 1296 (Siege of Carlisle) and 1314 (Battle of Bannockburn). The Order has enlarged the qualifying period to include the years up to 1320 to encompass not only the military incursions, but also the Declaration of Arbroath. See the following page for the skirmishes and battles that comprised that War.

Membership is open to any U.S. citizen, male or female, aged 18 or older, of good moral character, whose ancestors participated in any of the 21 battles, sieges, or skirmishes comprising the First Scottish War of Independence, from April 1296 through June 1314, or served as signatories to the "Declaration of Arbroath." A qualifying ancestor may have fought on either side of the battle - Scotland or England - and the specific battle must be identified.

Qualified applicants are encouraged to apply for membership.

For more information, contact the Order's Genealogist,  
Alexander Bannerman  
ScottishWarOfIndependence@gmail.com  
304-346-6646

# Qualifying Battles

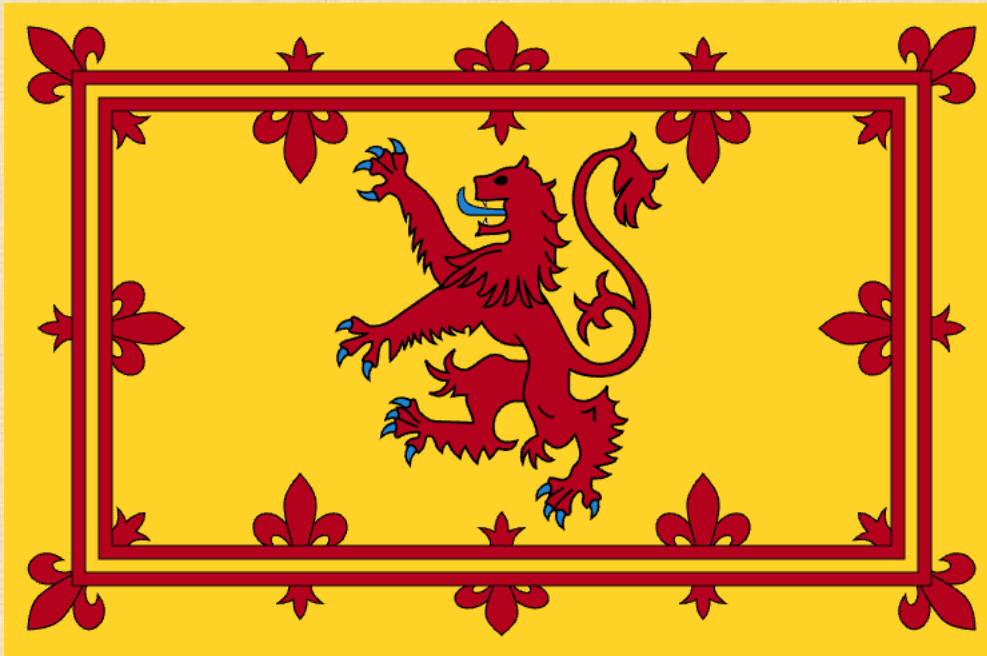
26 March 1296	<b><i>Siege of Carlisle Castle</i></b>
30 March 1296	<b><i>Siege of Berwick Castle</i></b>
27 April 1296	<b><i>Battle of Dunbar</i></b>
1296	<b><i>Siege of Edinburgh Castle</i></b>
1296	<b><i>Siege of Harbottle Castle</i></b>
May 1297	<b><i>Battle of Lanark</i></b>
1297, 1300, 1303 and 1310	<b><i>Sieges at Dundee Castle</i></b>
11 Sep 1297	<b><i>Battle of Stirling Bridge</i></b>
22 July 1298	<b><i>Battle of Falkirk</i></b>
1299	<b><i>First Siege of Lochmaben Castle</i></b>
May 1300	<b><i>Invasion of Annandale and Galloway</i></b>
July 1300	<b><i>Siege of Caerlaverock Castle</i></b>
Aug 1301	<b><i>Battle of Bothwell Castle</i></b>
Sep 1301	<b><i>Second Siege of Lochmaben Castle</i></b>
Nov 1302 - May 1303	<b><i>Ambush at Edinburgh, and the English Marches on Perth, Aberdeen, and Dunfermline</i></b>
1303	<b><i>Battle of Roslin</i></b>
May 1304	<b><i>Siege of Stirling Castle</i></b>
5 Aug 1305	<b><i>Battle of Robroyston</i></b>
19 June 1306	<b><i>Battle of Methven</i></b>
10 May 1307	<b><i>Battle of Loudoun Hill</i></b>
19 Feb 1314	<b><i>Siege of Roxburgh Castle</i></b>
23-24 June 1314	<b><i>Battle of Bannockburn</i></b>
April/May 1320	<b><i>Declaration of Arbroath</i></b>



**General Map of Scotland**  
by Joan Blaeu (1598-1673) from the collections of the  
Koninklijke Bibliotheek National Library of the  
Netherlands Public Domain, at  
[commons.wikimedia.org/](https://commons.wikimedia.org/)

\*Note – This list is periodically updated. Check the website for the latest version, at [www.scottishwarofindependence.org](http://www.scottishwarofindependence.org)

# The Final Word



**Lion Rampant of Scotland**

In the public domain at

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=2237174>

## Upcoming Meetings & Events

The next meeting of the Order will be on June 22, 2026 via Zoom (time TBD). More information and a zoom link will be released to the membership once meeting plans are finalized.

*The Arbroath Chronicle* is the annual electronic newsletter of the *Order of the First Scottish War of Independence, 1296-1320*, and is released each year in June. Submissions for inclusion in the newsletter must be received by the end of the preceding April for consideration. Submissions should be in Word format and directed to the Herald of the Order at [jtuck9048@gmail.com](mailto:jtuck9048@gmail.com).

The Order of the First Scottish War of Independence is a charitable and educational organization, committed to the study and preservation of medieval history and the verification of genealogies of descent from that period.

