

Robert the Bruce won independence for Scotland and a throne for himself. Across Scotland there are great historic sites linked to this giant of our nation's history. But he was not the only Bruce with ambitions. Others sought power as far afield as Ireland and Shetland, but few endured like King Robert I.



# BRUCE HERITAGE TAKES IN SOME OF THE THE MOST FAMOUS AND FASCINATING HISTORIC SITES IN SCOTLAND

Bruce Clan tartan

Bannockburn



Scone palace



## BRUCE SITES

Bruce heritage takes in some of Scotland's most famous and fascinating historic sites. They include Bannockburn, where Robert the Bruce defeated an overwhelming English force in 1314. The battle was fought when Edward II marched north to try and relieve the Scots' siege of Stirling Castle. Another fortress familiar to King Robert I was on an island in Lochleven, which he visited in 1313 and 1323.

Today it is possible to follow in his wake by taking a boat across the loch to explore a castle which, centuries later, was also used to imprison Mary, Queen of Scots.

The king's family hailed from the south-west Scotland and one of their early residences was another island castle on Loch Doon.

This remarkable little 11-sided castle was betrayed to the English in 1306 and only retaken in 1311.

Due to a 20<sup>th</sup>-century hydro-electric scheme the fortress was dismantled stone by stone and moved to the shore.

Among the most celebrated sites linked to King Robert is Arbroath Abbey where Abbot Bernard de Linton drafted a letter, now known as the Declaration of Arbroath, which many regard as the most important document in Scottish history.

The seals of the 45 nobles agreeing to its drafting were sent to Arbroath for affixing to the parchment.

Beyond proclaiming the kingdom's independence from England it contained the new idea that the monarch could only enter treaties with the consent of his nobles.

The declaration was sent to Pope John XXII in Avignon in an attempt to persuade him to withdraw his support from Edward II of England.

It was not an immediate success but nine years on, when Robert I was dying, Pope John wrote to the Scottish nobles to say he had granted what they asked.



### CORRUPTION AT THE EDGE OF BRITAIN

Muness on the Shetland island of Unst has the distinction of being the northernmost castle in Britain.

It was also the work of a Bruce – in this case Laurence who was made Sheriff of Shetland in 1571 where he became notorious for his greed and corruption.

He built the castle in 1598 when he became worried about the intentions of the new Earl of Orkney, Patrick Stewart.

In 1608 Patrick attacked with artillery but failed to take Muness Castle.

However the castle's luck did not last and it was taken and burned by French privateers in 1627.

### TREASON AND EXECUTION

Hermitage Castle, in the Scottish Borders, was much fought over in the Wars of Independence against England.

Its owner Sir Nicholas de Soules opposed Robert the Bruce when he had himself crowned in 1306. This ultimately proved a bad move.

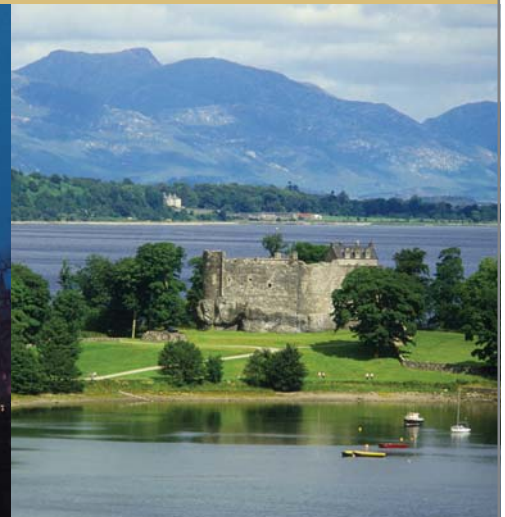
Years later in 1320 Nicholas' son, William, was accused of conspiring to murder Robert and have himself made king.

William was executed and the castle and lands were forfeited from his family.

Lochleven Castle

Dunfermline Abbey

Dunstaffnage Castle



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BUT OFTEN **ACCUSED** OF LACKING COMMON SENSE.

### BRUCE – KING OF IRELAND

Everyone has heard of Robert the Bruce – but his younger brother Edward also claimed to be a king.

He was ambitious and warlike, but often accused of lacking common sense.

In the tough years after Robert seized the crown in 1306 Edward sometimes proved a highly effective ally and led a successful invasion of Galloway.

In 1315 an assembly agreed that this “vigorous man, highly skilled in warfare” should be king of Scots if Robert died without a son.

But Edward wanted to carve out his own realm and plotted to drive the English from Ireland.

He landed in May 1315, had himself crowned, and won some early victories.

King Robert himself went across to Ireland to support his brother in 1317.

In October 1318 Edward rashly attacked a stronger enemy force, rather than wait for back-up, and was killed.

His head was cut off and presented to King Edward II of England.

The grand scheme may have failed, but it was astonishing that a family which had arrived in England as followers of William the Conqueror in 1066, should have risen to take the throne of Scotland and claim kingship of Ireland.



# BRUCE SITES

## 1 Balvenie Castle:

Taken from the Comyn family by Robert the Bruce.

## 2 Bannockburn:

In 1314 the army of Edward II was defeated at Bannockburn by Robert the Bruce.

## 3 Bothwell Castle:

The castle was partly dismantled by Robert the Bruce after Bannockburn to prevent occupation by the English.

## 4 Clackmannan Tower:

Said to have been the residence of Robert the Bruce and his son David II, the property came in 1358 to Sir Thomas Bruce, 1st Baron of Clackmannan, and remained in the family till 1796. Bruce's sword was kept here, and the last resident, Lady Catherine Bruce, used it to knight Robert Burns.

## 5 Crathes Castle:

The 16th-century castle, near Banchory, stands on an estate given by Robert the Bruce to the Burnett family in 1323. He presented them with the ancient Horn of Leys, which is still on display in the Great Hall.

## 6 Culross:

This small royal burgh provides a striking introduction to Scottish domestic life in the 16th and 17th centuries. Culross was then a thriving community, developed under the businesslike laird, Sir George Bruce, with a flourishing trade with other Forth ports and the Low Countries.

## 7 Dunstaffnage Castle:

The stronghold of the MacDougalls of Lorn was captured by Robert the Bruce in 1308 after his victory at the Battle of the Pass of Brander.

## 8 Dunfermline Abbey:

Robert the Bruce was buried here in 1329. The site of his tomb lies in the present parish church.

## 9 Hermitage Castle:

Robert the Bruce took the castle from the de Soulis family in 1320 after hearing of their plot against him.

## 10 Inverlochy Castle:

Built by the Comyns of Badenoch, Inverlochy came into Robert the Bruce's possession.

## 11 Loch Doon Castle:

Built in the 13th century by the Bruce Earls of Carrick or by Robert the Bruce's brother-in-law, Sir Christopher Seton of Carrick, and the Bruce is believed to have resorted here.

## 12 Lochleven Castle:

Robert the Bruce came to the island in 1313 and 1323 and Sir William Bruce of Balcaskie bought the estate in 1675.

## 13 Lochmaben Castle:

The first Lochmaben Castle built by the Bruce family around 1200 after their original residence at Annan had been badly damaged by flooding. The town's motto asserts its claim to be the birthplace of Robert the Bruce.

## 14 Melrose Abbey:

The heart of Robert the Bruce was carried on crusade to Spain by his friend Good Sir James Douglas.

## 15 Muness Castle:

Laurence Bruce of Cultmalindie (Perthshire), Sheriff of Shetland, built Muness in the late 16th century.

## 16 Scone Palace:

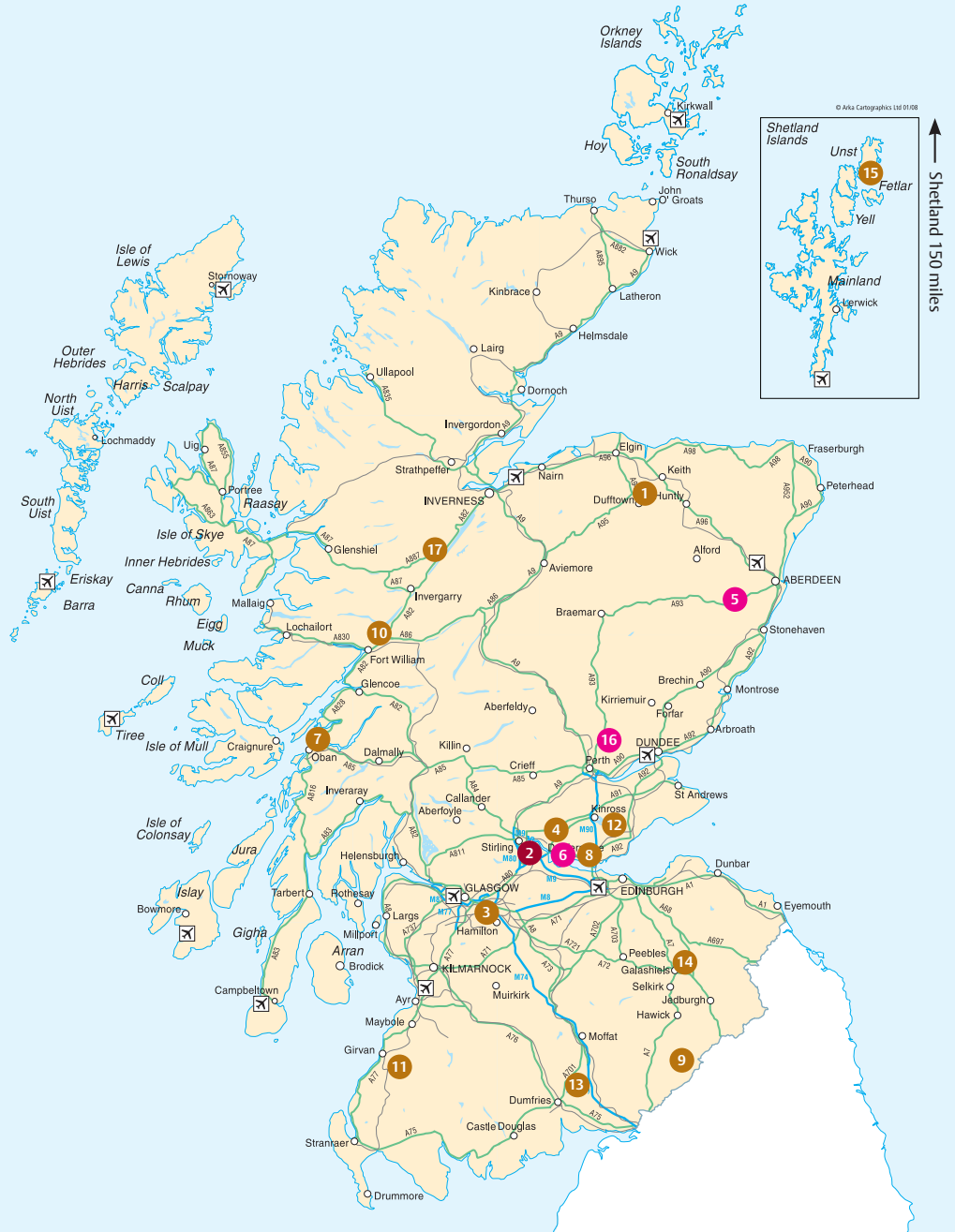
Inauguration site of Robert I 1306

## 17 Urquhart Castle:

The 13th-century stronghold built by the Durward family was captured by Robert the Bruce in 1308, and became a royal castle.

### Key to sites

- Historic Scotland
- National Trust Scotland
- Historic Houses Association



Melrose Abbey

Culross

Bothwell Castle

