EDWARD BRUCE 700

1 RATHLIN ISLAND

In the winter of 1306–07, Robert Bruce with several hundred of his men, and probably including his brother Edward, sought refuge on Rathlin Island. Fragmentary remains survive of 'Bruce's Castle' at the north-east corner of the island. Its builders might have been members of the Anglo-Norman Bisset family and it was probably here that Bruce spent his months on Rathlin. In 2007, a blue plaque was unveiled on the island to commemorate Robert's time there.

Visit by ferry from Ballycastle: www.rathlinballycastleferry.com (BT54 6BT)

2 LARNE LOUGH

According to Barbour's *Brus*, the Scottish army landed at 'Wolringis Fyrth' in late May 1315. This has been interpreted as Larne Lough. Another source gives 'Clondonne' which possibly refers to the mouth of the Glendun at Cushendun. It is likely that a force of 6,000 men would have needed several landing places along the Antrim coastline. The present ruins of Olderfleet Castle are probably those of a 16th-century building that may stand on an earlier site.

View the Lough from Larne Town Park, Glenarm Road, Larne (BT40 1DT)

3 CONNOR

The scene of one of the most important battles of medieval Ulster, the cathedral city of Connor was a place of some importance in the early 1300s. The Battle of Connor was fought on 10 September 1315 and resulted in a resounding defeat for the Anglo-Norman forces led by the Earl of Ulster. Today there are two signs on the approaches to the village of Connor which include a representation of Edward Bruce.

Connor is six miles south-east of Ballymena (BT42 3RB)

4 CARRICKFERGUS

The most important town of the Anglo-Norman earldom of Ulster, Carrickfergus still has a number of reminders of its medieval past. Carrickfergus was the effective headquarters of the Scottish army in Ulster and it was here that Edward Bruce was inaugurated King of Ireland in June 1315. Though the town was seized at the beginning of the campaign, the garrison in the 12th-century castle held out for some time before eventually surrendering to the Scots.

www.carrickfergus.org/tourism (BT38 7BG)

5 TULLAHOGUE

The former inauguration site of the O'Neills, Tullahogue is a tree-covered earthwork standing atop a hill with excellent views. The site was maintained by the O'Hagans, the local ruling family. There was once a stone coronation chair – the 'Stone of the Kings' – but this was destroyed by English troops in 1602 during the Nine Years' War. It is possible that Edward Bruce led his Scottish army close by Tullahogue in his march to Coleraine in 1315.

Tullywiggan Road, Tullahogue, Cookstown (entry via a steep lane)

6 DUNDONALD MOTTE

One of the most impressive of the mottes built by the Anglo-Normans was at Dundonald. At this beginning of the 1300s Richard De Burgh, the Earl of Ulster, was in possession of it. Dundonald was particularly badly affected during the Bruce campaign. In 1333, it was recorded that 'there was a castle which is now prostrate and destroyed by the War of the Scots'. The motte is now set in a public park.

Moat Park, Comber Road, Dundonald (BT16 2AH)

7 GREENCASTLE

In a beautiful setting with excellent views of the Mourne Mountains and Carlingford Lough, this impressive castle in state care is mainly 13th-century in date. It was captured by the forces of Edward Bruce in 1315/6 and a Scottish garrison placed in it under the command of Robert de Coulrath. It was afterwards retaken by the Anglo-Normans. Later, in 1328, Robert Bruce proposed holding a meeting here to agree a peace treaty between the Scots and the English.

Greencastle, Kilkeel www.greencastlecodown.org (BT34 4LR)

8 FAUGHART

The defeat of the Scottish army at the Battle of Faughart marked the end of the Bruce campaign in Ireland. Edward Bruce was killed in the fighting and his body afterwards quartered with his head sent to Edward II. A strong tradition persisted, however, that he was buried in the old graveyard at Faughart. A rough rectangular stone marks the supposed site of Bruce's grave with a recently-placed bilingual plaque at its head.

Between Newry and Dundalk, just off the N1 motorway

9 CASTLEROCHE

One of the most impressive castles anywhere in Ireland, Castleroche was built by the de Verdons in the 13th century. It is spectacularly situated on a rock outcrop with excellent views of the surrounding countryside. The castle suffered at the hands of the Scottish army of Edward Bruce and his Irish allies and was described in 1316/7 as 'so burned and destroyed by the Scots and Irish that no profit could be received'.

Between Dundalk and Crossmaglen off the N53

10 DUNDALK

An important Anglo-Norman town, Dundalk suffered a devastating attack by the Scots on 29 June 1315 when the friary and its contents were burned and many other buildings were razed. Some accounts place Edward Bruce's inauguration as King of Ireland at or near Dundalk in 1316. There is even a pub called King Bruce's Tavern in Francis Street in Dundalk town centre which stands on the site of Mortimer's Castle.

County Museum Dundalk, Jocelyn Street, Dundalk www.dundalkmuseum.ie

'...SCHYR EDWARD WAS COMMONALY CALLYT THE KING OF IRLAND...'

BARBOUR'S BRUS, 1375

TIMELINE OF MAJOR EVENTS

1286 **THE 'TURNBERRY BAND' AGREEMENT** involving the Bruces and Richard de Burgh, Earl of Ulster, forms the first step towards a Bruce claim to the Scottish crown.

1297 **WILLIAM WALLACE REPUTEDLY OFFERS SCOTTISH CROWN TO EDWARD BRUCE** should his brother Robert Bruce not accept it.

1306–07 **ROBERT BRUCE FINDS REFUGE ON RATHLIN ISLAND** with hundreds of his supporters and key allies. Edward Bruce was probably with him.

1308 **EDWARD MADE LORD OF GALLOWAY** and leads successful military campaign winning battles at Craignell, Kirroughtree and the River Dee.

1314 **SCOTTISH VICTORY AT BANNOCKBURN** Edward Bruce leads one of the four Scottish divisions in the battle.

1315 **25 MAY** Scottish army of 6,000 men led by Edward Bruce leave Ayr for east Antrim. They win the Battle of Mounthill and proceed to Carrickfergus.

1315 **EARLY JUNE** Edward inaugurated King of Ireland at or near Carrickfergus, supported by Irish allies and 'the kings of that country'.

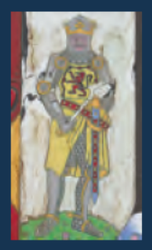
1315 **10 SEPTEMBER** Edward's victory at the Battle of Connor near Ballymena leaves him master of Ulster.

1316–17 **ROBERT BRUCE IN IRELAND** Leads campaign as far south as Limerick with Edward. The Scots fail to take Dublin and return northwards.

1318 **14 OCTOBER** Scottish defeat at the Battle of Faughart. Edward did not wait for reinforcements from Scotland and was killed. Scots return home.

IRELAND BEFORE THE BRUCES

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY, Ireland was divided between areas where the Anglo-Norman lords held sway and regions that were controlled by powerful Gaelic Irish families. In Ulster the Anglo-Normans were strongest in the east of the province, especially in the coastal regions of counties Antrim and Down. The seat of Anglo-Norman power in Ulster was the town of Carrickfergus with its imposing castle that had been begun in the late twelfth century by **John de Courcy**. The most powerful Anglo-Norman lord was **Richard de Burgh**, the Earl of Ulster – Robert Bruce's father-in-law. Among the other leading Anglo-Norman families in Ulster were the **Mandevilles, Bissets, Logans** and **Savages**. The leading Gaelic Irish figure in Ulster was **Domhnall O Neill**, king of Tyrone, a distant cousin of the Bruces.



Depiction of Robert Bruce on the arrival signage at Lochmaben, Dumfries & Galloway.

IRELAND AFTER THE BRUCES

THE BRUCE CAMPAIGN OF 1315–18 HAD A DEVASTATING IMPACT on the Anglo-Norman earldom of Ulster. **Richard de Burgh** seems not to have attempted to restore his lands and for an investigation some 15 years after the end of the campaign recorded the continued state of dereliction of the earldom as a result of the 'War of the Scots'. In 1333, the last resident Earl of Ulster, **William de Burgh**, was killed near Belfast. Around 1350 a branch of the **Tyrone O'Neills** moved eastwards and established a base in south Antrim, in time extending their power to east Antrim and north County Down, controlling areas that had previously belonged to the earldom of Ulster. In 1605, two Ayrshiremen, **James Hamilton** and **Hugh Montgomery** acquired large tracts of these lands which were then tenanted by Scots, many of them descended from allies of the Bruces.

Depiction of Edward Bruce on the arrival signage at Connor, County Antrim.

11 BANNOCKBURN

On 23/24 June 1314 the forces of Robert Bruce won a stunning victory at Bannockburn over a much larger English army. The smaller, agile, Scots army of around 7,000 men routed the 20,000-strong English force that had marched from Berwick to relieve Stirling Castle that was being besieged by the Scots. Robert's brother Edward played his part in the victory, leading one of the four Scottish divisions.

Battle of Bannockburn Visitor Centre, Glasgow Road, Stirling (FK7 0LJ)

12 DUNFERMLINE ABBEY

Dunfermline is one of the best places in Scotland to explore its medieval past. Robert Bruce died in 1329 and his body (minus his heart) was interred in Dunfermline Abbey. His tomb was rediscovered in 1818 and is now marked by a fine brass cover. Look out for 'King Robert the Bruce' in large stone lettering at the top of the tower of the abbey church. Each year Dunfermline hosts an annual Bruce festival.

www.dunfermlineabbey.co.uk (KY12 7PE)

13 EDINBURGH CASTLE

A place of immense strategic importance, Edinburgh Castle was much fought over during the Wars of Independence. It was captured for the Bruces in a daring assault in 1314, a few months before Bannockburn. At the entrance to the castle are two stone statues, the one on the left representing Robert Bruce (King Robert I) and the other Sir William Wallace. The exhibition features a tableau of Robert's crowning by his supporters at Scone in 1306.

Castlehill, Edinburgh www.edinburghcastle.gov.uk (EH1 2NG)

14 AYR (SEAFRONT & ST JOHN'S TOWER)

Ayr was the most strategically important port on the south-west coast of Scotland. In recognition of its military and civil importance Ayr had been raised to the status of a Royal Burgh in 1205. It was the location of Robert Bruce's assembly (or parliament) of 26 April 1315 that endorsed the campaign. A month later, on 25 May, the Scottish fleet carrying 6,000 men set sail for Ayr for the coastline of County Antrim.

Esplanade, Ayr (KA7 1DT) / Montgomerie Terrace, Ayr (KA7 1JL)

15 CROSSRAGUEL ABBEY

The abbey at Crossraguel, conveniently located alongside the main road from Ayr to Stranraer, just south of Maybole, was founded by Duncan, Earl of Carrick, in the early 1200s. Duncan was an ancestor of Robert Bruce and it is known that Bruce was baptised here. Though much of the complex of buildings has been lost, the ruin is still impressive and an excellent view of the site can be seen from the top of the gatehouse.

A77 between Turnberry and Maybole www.historic-scotland.gov.uk (KA19 8HQ)

16 KIRKOSWALD

In this village, located a few miles south of Maybole on the main road linking Ayr and Stranraer, is a ruined church that was once attended by the poet Robert Burns. He immortalised the village cobbler (or souter) in *Tam o' Shanter*. Johnnie Souter's Cottage is across the road from the church. A stone font within the church ruins is said to have been the one used for Robert Bruce's christening.

A77 between Turnberry and Maybole (KA19 8HY)

17 TURNBERRY CASTLE RUINS

Robert Bruce was born here in 1274 and possibly his younger brother Edward also. In 1286 an agreement – the 'Turnberry Band' – was signed here which formed the basis of the Bruce claim to the crown of Scotland. While the Bruces were on Rathlin, the castle was taken by the English, but they won it back in a surprise attack in February 1307. Today only fragmentary ruins remain of the castle alongside the world-famous Turnberry golf course.

Can be viewed from the beach or from the A719 road to Maidens

18 GLENLUCE ABBEY

A Cistercian abbey was founded at Glenluce in the early 1190s by Roland, Lord of Galloway. Though much of the abbey has gone, it is still possible to imagine what it must once have looked like. Near the end of his life, in the early months of 1329, Robert Bruce made a pilgrimage to St Ninian's Shrine at Whithorn Priory. He rested at Glenluce before continuing on his journey.

Glenluce, Newton Stewart www.historic-scotland.gov.uk (DG8 0JH)

19 GLEN TROOL

The first major clash following Bruce's return from Rathlin Island was in March 1307 when Robert Bruce and his men attacked an English force at Glen Trool. Taking advantage of the terrain to stage an ambush, the encounter was brief and resulted in a Scottish victory. This battle is regarded as the beginning of the campaign for Scottish independence. A large monument stone with inscription was installed here in 1929.

Take the A714 from Newton Stewart www.gallowayforestpark.com (DG8 6SZ)

20 LOCHMABEN

The Bruce ancestors of Robert Bruce settled at Lochmaben around 1200 and built an earthen motte. They were lords of Annandale and this was their principal power centre. Robert Bruce's grandfather, known as 'The Competitor', died there in 1295. This motte is now within a golf course. A later castle stands on a promontory in Castle Loch and was begun around 1300 by Edward I of England during the Wars of Independence.

Take the A709 from Dumfries (DG11 1LP)

25TH MAY 1315

THE LARNE LANDING

According to Barbour, the Scottish fleet **'arrived safely … without skirmish or attack, and sent their ships every one home.'** Barbour specifies the location for the landing as 'Wolringis Fyrth', i.e. Viking's Forth, which has traditionally been understood as being **Larne Lough**. The *Laud Annals* refer to **'Clandonne'** which has been interpreted as either **Clondunmales** (now **Drumalis, Larne**) or possibly **Glendun** further up the coast. A large fleet would have needed multiple landing locations.

The story of the arrival of the Scottish army in the Larne area was passed down through the generations and was well known in the nineteenth century. On 3 January 1893, the antiquarian **F.J. Bigger** spoke to the Belfast Art Society on suitable subjects for historical pictures. He said:

> '… On 25th May 1315, Lord Edward Bruce landed at Olderfleet, Larne, with a great company of Scottish nobility and 6,000 men. What a picture this would make! The Corran still remains as heretofore, and sufficient of the ancient castle of the Bissets to give an accurate idea of its original appearance; the waters of the lough covered by an animated squadron galleys, crowded with armed men, each ship displaying the flag of the clan on board, whilst that bearing the Bruce would be distinguished by a Royal banner…'

Bigger had his wish fulfilled in 1899 when the brochure produced for the **Larne Grand Fete** featured on its front cover an illustration recreating the arrival of Bruce and his fleet. In 1976, a re-enactment event was held in Larne entitled **'The Bruce Cavalcade'** when hundreds of people lined the streets.

Larne Lough. Bruce's fleet is likely to have landed at multiple locations along the east Antrim coastline – a stretch of land which had been granted to his ancestors by King John in the early 1200s. An estimated 2million people every year sail by ferry between Scotland and Northern Ireland.

EARLY JUNE 1315

'CORONATION' AT CARRICKFERGUS

Having defeated an Anglo-Norman army at **Mounthill**, the Scots moved on to Carrickfergus, the most important Anglo-Norman stronghold in Ulster with its imposing castle standing sentinel over Belfast Lough. Alongside the castle a town had developed which was a centre of trade and commerce. The Bruce forces seized **the town of Carrickfergus** – but not the castle – and established what would effectively be their base camp for the duration of the campaign.

According to Barbour, shortly after taking Carrickfergus **'… the folk of Ulster had come entirely to his [Edward Bruce's] peace… there came to him and made fealty some of the kings of that country, a good ten or twelve…'**. Historians have interpreted this moment as what could be described as Edward Bruce's 'coronation' as King of Ireland. Professor Sean Duffy has written, **'all the evidence suggests that Edward and his Irish allies had intended that he become king from the start of his Irish adventure and that this was in fact enacted, at or near Carrickfergus, at some stage in June 1315.'**

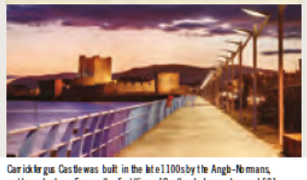
In the Irish annals for 1315, it is recorded that **'the Ulstermen consented to his being proclaimed King of Ireland and all the Gaels of Ireland agreed to grant him lordship and they called him King of Ireland.'**

In his work 'Hints for Irish Historical Paintings', the Irish Nationalist **Thomas Davis** (1814-45) proposed the 'Crowning of Edward Bruce' as a subject worthy of being captured by an artist.

Illustration of Edward Bruce being crowned, published in *The Story of Ireland; a Narrative of Irish History* by A.M. Sullivan (1883 edition)

THE IRISH LEADERS 'REMONSTRANCE' TO THE POPE (1317)

One of the most important historical documents of medieval Ireland is the 'Remonstrance' sent by Domhnall O Neill and other Irish leaders to Pope John XXII in 1317. In this document they set out how they had sought 'help and assistance [from] Edward de Bruyis, illustrious earl of Carrick, brother of Robert by the grace of God most illustrious king of the Scots, who is sprung from our noblest ancestors.' According to the 'Remonstrance', the Irish kings had 'unanimously established and set him up as our king and lord in our kingdom' for they considered Bruce to be 'pious and prudent, humble and chaste, exceedingly temperate, in all things sedate and moderate'.



Carrickfergus Castle was built in the late 1100s by the Anglo-Normans, on the rock where Fergus, the first King of Scotland, drowned around 501.

10 SEPTEMBER 1315

THE BATTLE OF CONNOR

At **Connor**, near Ballymena, Richard de Burgh, Earl of Ulster, gathered huge food stores for his own troops. Driven by hunger, Bruce's army learned about these supplies, and travelled to within just a few miles of them. They set up camp and waited. De Burgh's army were camped close by, and a daily patrol between the camp and the Connor food stores kept de Burgh's men well supplied.

Choosing the right moment, a detachment of the Scots army attacked this patrol so suddenly that they had no time to retaliate. Bruce's men took their clothing and disguised themselves as the patrol, and at dusk, they rode back toward the Anglo-Norman encampment. De Burgh's men must have thought the patrol was returning with the day's food. As the disguised patrol neared the de Burgh encampment, Bruce's force launched an attack, reputedly killing 1,000 men. Victorious, the Scots rode back to their own camp to prepare for an all-out attack.

De Burgh pulled his army back into Connor that night, but early the following morning (10 September 1315) a regiment led an attack on the Bruce camp. However, the Scots had been expecting this, and as a decoy they had left their banners flying over their camp to create the impression that they were still there. De Burgh's men were lured into the trap, and were once again attacked by the waiting Scots.

Such was the confusion that Bruce's army entered the town of Connor, took control of the food stores and seized the corn, flour and wine and carried it to their headquarters at Carrickfergus. One of the most important battles in medieval Ulster, Bruce's victory at Connor left him as the effective master of the northern province of Ireland.

'A PLACE OF SOME IMPORTANCE'

The 19th-century historian George Benn observed: 'Connor from its antiquity and ecclesiastical character – but still more from its association with the name of Edward Bruce – is, perhaps, one of the most interesting spots in the County of Antrim.' Once the location of a cathedral, in the early 1300s it was a place of some importance. To the south of Connor is 'Bruce's Hill', so named from the place where Edward Bruce is said to have stood. In Barbour's *The Brus*, Connor is spelled 'Coigneris'. Older residents still pronounce it as 'Conyer'.

Today there are two signs on the approaches to the village of Connor which include a representation of Edward Bruce.

14 OCTOBER 1318

DEATH AT FAUGHART

After three-and-a-half years the Bruce campaign ended disastrously in defeat at the Battle of Faughart on 14 October 1318 with Edward Bruce himself killed in the fighting. In the autumn of that year he had led his men towards Dundalk, possibly in search of food and supplies in the face of severe famine conditions. Two miles outside Dundalk, the Scots army (with some support from the **de Lacys**) squared up to an Anglo-Norman force commanded by **John de Bermingham**.

In the ensuing battle the Scots were routed and Edward Bruce was killed by **Sir John Maupas.** Many of the leading men in the Scottish army were killed. **Sir Philip Mowbray** escaped from the battlefield at Faughart badly wounded and returned to Scotland to bring the news of Edward's death to his brother King Robert.

Few of the Irish mourned Bruce's death at Faughart. The record of Edward's death in the *Annals of Ulster* states that **'…there was not done from the beginning of the world a deed that was better for the Men of Ireland than that deed. For there came death and loss of people during his time in all Ireland in general for the space of three years and a half and people undoubtedly used to eat each other throughout Ireland'.**

The remnants of Edward's army headed back towards Carrickfergus, pursued by de Bermingham's men. On reaching the coast they boarded ships and returned to Scotland. It was the end of the campaign. The threat from Scotland, whether real or imagined, continued for some time afterwards, and even the area around Carrickfergus was subject to occasional Scottish raids. However, there was to be no further Bruce-instigated invasion of Ireland.

The view from the Hill of Faughart, County Louth. The flat stone on the reputed grave of Edward Bruce includes a plaque which bears the inscription 'Edward Bruce, King of Ireland, Killed in Battle of Faughart, 14th October 1318'.

TWO BROTHERS,
TWO COUNTRIES,
TWO CROWNS.

FOLLOW THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE BRUCES ACROSS SCOTLAND, ULSTER AND IRELAND.

TEXT BY: Mark Thompson, Dr Eric Graham, Dr William Roulston.
WITH THANKS TO: Robert the Bruce Commemoration Trust, SS Crome Associates and Ailsa Horizons.

WWW.ULSTERSCOTSAGENCY.COM
WWW.ANCESTRYIRELAND.COM

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Ulster Scots Academy
Ulster-Scots Agency
Boord o Ulstèr-Scotch
Ulster Historical Foundation

EDWARD BRUCE 700

HERITAGE TRAIL

20 SITES CONNECTING SCOTLAND ULSTER & IRELAND

The connections between Ulster and Scotland date back millennia. The story of the campaign in Ireland led by Edward Bruce, brother of King Robert I, of 1315–18 is one of the most important early examples of shared Ulster-Scottish history. Though the story may have largely slipped from the popular consciousness, historians have long recognised that the Bruce campaign in Ireland was an event of far-reaching significance.

The story is a far from straightforward one and reflects all of the complexity of the relationships between these islands in the medieval period. For example, Robert Bruce was married to a daughter of Richard de Burgh, Earl of Ulster, the man who would be the Scottish army's principal opponent in the north of Ireland. Robert Bruce was also the feudal lord of a large swathe of territory in County Antrim through his mother's family. There is even a suggestion that his younger brother Edward may have been fostered by an Irish family. At other times Scots fought Scots and Anglo-Normans battled Anglo-Normans. Crucial to the Scots early successes was the support they received from a number of the Irish leaders, to some of whom the Bruces were related.

The Scottish campaign in Ireland began less than a year after Robert Bruce's crushing victory at Bannockburn in June 1314. It was led by his brother Edward who seems to have needed little encouragement to take charge of the campaign. Indeed, many see him as being the prime instigator of it and that he was motivated by dynastic ambitions of his own. As John Barbour states in his epic narrative of 1375, *The Brus*, *The History of Robert the Bruce King of Scots*, Edward, 'with great joy in his heart, and with the consent of the king, gathered to him men of great valour.'

ON 25TH MAY 1315, EDWARD BRUCE SAILED FROM AYR TO LARNE LOUGH
LEADING THE 6,000-STRONG BANNOCKBURN ARMY TO THEIR NEXT CHALLENGE…

KING OF SCOTLAND
BRUCE FAMILY ARMS
EDWARD BRUCE
EARL OF CARRICK

SIR EDWARD BRUCE

the Earl of Carrick, Who was bolder than a leopard,
and had no desire to be at peace,
Thought Scotland too small for his brother and himself;
Therefore he set his purpose to be King of Ireland…'

BARBOUR'S BRUS, 1375