

family Bruce

(1066-1528)

from the lands of Bruis, in France

The Bruce (or, de Brus) family originated in the Normandy region of France and came to the British Isles with William the Conqueror.^a The name came from the lands of Bruis, Braose, or Breaux (between Cherbough and Valognes, France) where they were noblemen. Records of the *Roll of Knights* of those who took part in William's expedition mentions the lords of Breaux with two hundred men.

de Brus of Scotland

Following is a brief history of fifteen generations of the Bruce family in England and Scotland, one of the most powerful and influential families in the British Isles.

Robert³² de Brus (- 1094): The first de Brus specifically identified is Robert, who, for his service to William the Conqueror, received the grant of ninety-four manors encompassing 40,000 acres in Yorkshire in north-central England. His son was also Robert³¹.

Robert³¹ Bruce, first Lord of Annandale (- 1141): Robert became friends with King David I of Scotland at the Court of King Henry I of England and in 1124 received from David the grant of Annandale, a long valley extending from saltwater to mountains in southern Scotland^b. He then became known as Robert Bruce, First Lord of Annandale. He was also Lord Cleveland of North Yorkshire and he long served King Henry as Justice or Chief Royal Agent in the north of England. He had two sons, Adam and Robert³⁰.

At this point the English and Scottish houses of Bruce diverge – Adam, the oldest son, took the lands of Yorkshire in England. Robert³⁰, the younger son, took Annandale in Scotland.

^a See **William the Conqueror**, page 24.

^b Annandale is a long valley consisting of 200,000 acres, reaching from salt-water at the Solway Firth, nearly thirty miles into the hills around Moffat in southern Scotland. For more information relating to the nature of the grant, see **David I, King of Scots**, page 41.

Robert³⁰ Bruce, second Lord of Annandale (- 1189): Annandale was gifted to Robert³⁰ when he was still a young man by his father, Robert³¹, first Lord of Annandale, because his father had abandoned the cause of King David who had given him the land and title, and was supporting a rival king, King Stephen. Robert³⁰, second Lord of Annandale, continued to support King David in order to protect his properties.

However, Annandale was taken from Robert³⁰ when he fought in the Battle of Standard, 1138, along with King David against King Stephen who won. It was Robert³¹ the first, that captured his son, Robert³⁰ the second, then fourteen years of age, in battle.

Annandale was restored to Robert³⁰ in 1166 in a confirmation granted by William the Lion for a fee consisting of the service of one hundred knights. Robert had two sons, the second of which was William²⁹, who succeeded to Annandale.

William²⁹ de Brus, third Lord of Annandale (- 1215): William's son was Robert²⁸.

Robert²⁸ de Brus, fourth Lord of Annandale (- 1245): Robert married Isabel²⁸, the daughter of David²⁹, Earl of Huntington and great-granddaughter of King David³¹ I of Scotland. (Note that this relationship to King David becomes significant in future generations – see Isabel, page 41). Their son was also Robert²⁷.

Robert²⁷, fifth Lord of Annandale (1210 - 1294): He was known as *the Competitor* or *the Claimant*. Robert married Isabel²⁷ de Clare, daughter of Sir Gilbert²⁸ de Clare, Magna Carta Security, seventh Earl of Clare and Earl of Hertford and Glouster.

In 1237, at the death of Robert's Uncle John, Earl of Chester and Huntington, his mother Isabel came into possession of the rich lordship the Earl held in Scotland, which Robert eventually inherited.

Robert served for twenty years as a royal judge and became the first chief justice of the Court of Kings Bench. As such, he was one of

most powerful and influential men in all of England.

In 1264 he led a large force of men-at-arms to Nottingham to support King Henry III of England and his son, Lord Edward. Their army was defeated at Lewes and King Henry III, Lord Edward, and Robert were taken prisoner. Robert's son was later able to arrange for his ransom and release.

Robert went to the crusades in the Holy Land in 1270 when sixty years of age. He did so in the company of Lord Edmund, Henry III's youngest son.

After this he raised an army and marched against Dumfries, a prominent area of Scotland, in his attempt to obtain the crown as King of Scots. The crown was in question and Robert had a claim to it through his mother. He was successful in his battles, but unsuccessful in ob-

taining the crown. Robert & Isabel's son was also Robert²⁶.

Robert Bruce²⁶, sixth Lord of Annandale (-1304): Robert had no ambitions toward the crown and instead went crusading to the Holy Land with a neighbor, Adam, Lord of Kilconquhar. When Adam was killed, Robert returned with the sad news for his widow, Marjorie²⁶, Countess of Carrick who was, in her own right, the holder of a Celtic earldom descended from the ancient Lords of Galloway. Robert undoubtedly saw an opportunity here and married the widowed Countess Marjorie²⁶, which, in addition to combining their estates, gave him the additional title of Earl of Carrick.

Robert was King Edward's governor of Carlisle. Robert & Marjorie had a number of sons, one of which was Robert²⁵, who became known to history as *Robert the Bruce*.

Robert the Bruce



Robert Bruce²⁵, seventh Lord of Annandale and Earl of Carrick (1276 - 1329); King of Scots (1306 - 1329):

Following the death of Alexander III, King of Scots, there was a period of time when there were conflicts concerning the successor to the crown. King Edward I of England took advantage of the situation by taking Scotland by force and establishing his own vassal king. There was much Scottish resistance, led first by William Wallace^a, and then by Robert Bruce after Wallace was captured in battle, tortured, and hanged in 1305.

By 1306 the contest for the crown was only between John Comyn and Robert Bruce. The two met in the church of the Minorite friars in Dumfries and engaged in conversation and negotiations before the high altar in hopes in resolving conflicts. An argument arose and Bruce drew his dagger and stabbed Comyn in the heart. Comyn died and Robert Bruce had himself crowned King Robert I, against any odds that he might succeed -- Robert had killed Edward I's choice of vassal king for Scotland and Edward's English troops were roaming freely through a defeated Scotland; Robert had earned the wrath of the Pope for committing murder on the altar of the church and was excommunicated; and Comyn was from a large, prominent, and prosperous Scottish family who would support the English king against this fiery upstart.

^a In the popular 1995 movie, *Braveheart*, William Wallace was played by Mel Gibson. In the movie Robert Bruce's role was corrupted to a near villainous participant in Scottish history.



Robert the Bruce
and William Wallace

Robert the Bruce was one of the fighter kings of Scotland. At one point during the battle of Bannockburn, Bruce was riding a pony with only a battle-axe as a weapon. An English Knight, Sir Henry de Bohun, recognized the king by the gold coronet on his helmet and rode full speed at Bruce on his huge war-horse, intending to run him through with his twelve foot lance. Just as he closed in, Bruce turned his nimble pony aside and avoided the thrust of de Bohun's lance. Bruce then closed in, stood up full-height in his saddle, and with one blow of his axe on de Bohun's helmet, split open his head and felled him to the ground.



King Robert could only muster a pitiful few to fight with him and soon was defeated in battle with the English and had to flee to islands off the coast of Ireland. Nevertheless, he persisted in his efforts against the English. The war fared poorly for the Scottish for many years and at times King Robert and his men were reduced to guerrilla warfare while living in caves. Because he was so outnumbered he adopted a highly mobile force, making quick striking ambush raids and then easily outdistancing the more cumbersome organized English troops in pursuit. His strength of character and courageous leadership, along with demonstrated success, albeit small at first, earned Robert support. King Robert had four brothers – Edward, Nigel, Thomas, and Alexander. In subsequent battles with the English, all except Edward were made prisoners and hanged. Robert narrowly escaped capture, although his wife and daughter were captured and held as prisoners in England.



Robert the Bruce proved to be a courageous leader and brilliant military tactician. Under his command the Scots eventually prevailed. Robert the Bruce concluded what was called the Thirty Year War on June 24, 1314 when he defeated King Edward II of England at Bannockburn in a battle in which Robert's army was outnumbered three-to-one. That day remains memorable to all Scots as the day they drove the English out of Scotland, and Robert the Bruce is honored as the greatest of the Scottish heroes of history. In that battle Robert captured enough English noblemen to enable him to ransom his wife and daughter and other supporters held as prisoners by the English.

Robert later led his armies into England as far as Yorkshire. He invaded and conquered Ireland and in 1316 crowned brother Edward as King of Ireland, although Edward was later killed on the battlefield in Dunkalk.

Robert had four lawful children. By his first wife, Isabel²⁵ (daughter of Donald²⁶, Earl of Mar and his wife, Helen²⁶, the daughter of Llewellyn²⁷, Prince of North Wales) he had Princess Marjorie²⁴. By his second wife, Elizabeth de Burg, who became Queen of Scotland on Robert's coronation in 1306, he had two daughters and a son, who was to later become King David, II. It is reported he had a number of children by other women.



Robert the Bruce died 7 June 1329 at Cadross, Scotland, having accomplished all of his goals but one. He had defeated England and freed Scotland, and the Pope was preparing a papal letter which would give recognition to Robert I and his successors as kings of an independent Scotland. His only unaccomplished goal was that he had not gone on a crusade to the Holy Land. On his deathbed he vowed "*Seeing therefore, that my body cannot go to achieve what my heart desires, I will send my heart instead of my body.*" Upon his instructions his heart was removed from his body at his death, embalmed, and carried to the Holy Land in a silver box.

Princess Marjorie²⁴: Marjorie was the daughter of Robert the Bruce and Isabel. Along with her mother, she was captured and held prisoner in England after her father, Robert the Bruce, was crowned King of Scots, and was not freed until Robert defeated the English at Bannockburn eight years later.

Marjorie married Walter²⁴ III, Lord High Steward of Scotland (son of James²⁵ of Scotland and the grandson of Alexander²⁶ the Steward of Scotland). They had one son, Robert²³, and Marjorie died in childbirth.

King Robert²³ II: Robert became king after the death of his uncle, David II. He was the first of the Royal House of Stewart which ruled Scotland, and eventually all of Britain. He married Elizabeth²³ Mure. His son, Robert²², succeeded him to the throne.

King Robert²² III, Lord Kyle, Earl of Carrick (1340 - 1406): Robert had been severely injured by a horse-kick, so power was exercised by a regent - first his brother, Earl of Fife, and then by his son, David, Duke of Rothesay. He married Annabelle²² Drummond.



Princess Mary²¹ Stewart: Mary married Sir James²¹ Kennedy of Dunure. Their son was Gilbert²⁰.

At this point the genealogy lineage being followed departs from the lineage of royalty.

Gilbert²⁰, first Lord Kennedy: His son was John¹⁹.

John¹⁹, second Lord Kennedy: He had a daughter, Margaret¹⁸.

Lady Margaret¹⁸ Kennedy (- 1528): Lady Margaret married Sir Patrick Vans of Barnbaroch¹⁸. (For a continuation of the genealogy, see Sir Patrick¹⁸ Vans, page 45.)

Bart's cousin, Queen Elizabeth

Because all Scottish and British royalty, from time antiquity to present, are related and because Bart is related to Robert I→III, Kings of Scotland, it can be concluded that Bart is also related to all other British royalty. Such is the case. In fact, Bart is related to much of the royalty in all of Europe and Scandinavia.



Henry VIII, married six times, aided, in part, by his having several of his wives beheaded, is Bart's thirteenth cousin, seventeen times removed.

Richard the Third, immortalized by Shakespeare when he said, "*A horse, a horse, my kingdom for a horse*" during the Battle of the Roses, is Bart's eleventh cousin, nineteen times removed.



The present monarch, Queen Elizabeth, is Bart's eighteenth cousin, two times removed. Their common ancestors are King Robert²² III of Scotland and his wife, Annabelle²² Drummond, Bart's nineteenth great-grandparents.

Sources:

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