

SCOTLAND VS. ENGLAND

By Ken McNaughton

*The historic power struggle between England and Scotland
is epitomized by three men—King Edward I of England
and William Wallace and Robert the Bruce of Scotland.*

By the 1280s the relationship between the nations of England and Scotland was one of relatively harmonious coexistence. In 1278 King Alexander III of Scotland paid homage to Edward I, but apparently only for the lands he held of Edward in England. Remember, the first written evidence of the Macnachten Clan is a charter dated 12 February 1267 from King Alexander III to Gillecríst Macnachdan and his heirs for the keeping of his castle and island of Frechelan in Loch Awe, when a Norse invasion from the west may still have been a threat [1].

Problems arose only with the Scottish succession crisis of the early 1290s [2]. In the years from 1281 to 1284, Alexander's two sons and one daughter died in quick succession. Then, in 1286, Alexander died himself, leaving as heir to the throne of Scotland his three-year-old granddaughter, Margaret. By the Treaty of Birgham, it was agreed that Margaret should marry King Edward's then six-year-old son Edward of Carnarvon, though Scotland would remain free of English overlordship. Margaret, by now seven years of age, sailed from Norway for Scotland in the autumn of 1290, but fell ill on the way and died in Orkney. This left the country without an obvious heir, and led to the succession dispute known to history as the Great Cause.

Even though as many as fourteen claimants put forward their claims to the title, the real contest was between John Balliol and Robert de Brus. The Scottish magnates made a request to Edward to conduct the proceedings and administer the outcome, but not to arbitrate in the dispute. The actual decision would be made by 104 auditors—40 appointed by Balliol, 40 by Bruce and the remaining 24 selected by Edward I from senior members of the Scottish political community. At Birgham, with the prospect of a personal union between the two realms, the question of suzerainty had not been of great importance to Edward. Now he insisted that, if he were to settle the contest, he had to be fully recognized as Scotland's feudal overlord. The Scots were reluctant to make such a concession, and replied that since the country had no king, no one had the authority to make this decision. This problem was circumvented when the competitors agreed that the realm would be handed over to Edward until a rightful heir had been found. After a lengthy hearing, a decision was made in favor of John Balliol on 17 November 1292.

Even after Balliol's accession, Edward still continued to assert his authority over Scotland. Against the objections of the Scots, he agreed to hear appeals on cases ruled on by the court of guardians that had governed Scotland during the interregnum. A further provocation came in a case brought by Macduff, son of Malcolm, Earl of Fife, in which Edward demanded that Balliol appear in person before the English Parliament to answer

the charges. This the Scottish King did, but the final straw was Edward's demand that the Scottish magnates provide military service in the war against France. This was unacceptable; the Scots instead formed an alliance with France and launched an unsuccessful attack on Carlisle in northwest England. Edward responded by invading Scotland in 1296 and taking the town of Berwick, northeast England, in a particularly bloody attack. At the Battle of Dunbar, a few miles up the coast from Berwick, Scottish resistance was effectively crushed. Edward confiscated the Stone of Destiny, the Scottish coronation stone, and brought it to Westminster, placing it in what became known as King Edward's Chair; he deposed Balliol and placed him in the Tower of London, and installed Englishmen to govern Scotland. But the English triumph would only be temporary.

The situation in Scotland had seemed resolved when Edward left in 1296, but resistance soon emerged under the leadership of William Wallace. On 11 September 1297, a large English force under the leadership of John de Warenne, Earl of Surrey, and Hugh de Cressingham was routed by a much smaller Scottish army led by Wallace and Andrew Moray at Stirling Bridge. The defeat sent shockwaves into England and preparations for a retaliatory campaign started immediately. Soon after Edward returned from Flanders, he headed north. On 22 July 1298 he defeated Wallace's forces at the Battle of Falkirk. Edward, however, was not able to take advantage of the momentum and the next year the Scots managed to recapture Stirling Castle. Even though Edward campaigned in Scotland, both in 1300 when he successfully besieged Caerlaverock Castle and in 1301, the Scots refused to engage in open battle, preferring to raid the English countryside in smaller groups.

The defeated Scots appealed to Pope Boniface VIII to assert a claim of overlordship of Scotland in place of the English. His papal bull addressed to King Edward in these terms was firmly rejected on Edward's behalf by the Barons' Letter of 1301. The English managed to subdue the country by other means, however. In 1303, a peace agreement was reached between England and France, effectively breaking up the Franco-Scottish alliance. Robert the Bruce, the grandson of the claimant to the crown in 1291, Robert de Brus, had sided with the English in the winter of 1301–02. By 1304, most of the other nobles of the country had also pledged their allegiance to Edward, and this year the English also managed to re-take Stirling Castle. In 1305 Wallace was betrayed by Sir John de Menteith and turned over to the English, who had him taken to London where he was publicly executed. With Scotland largely under English control, Edward installed Englishmen and collaborating Scots to govern the country.

The situation changed again on 10 February 1306, when Robert the Bruce murdered his rival John Comyn and a few weeks later, on 25 March, had himself crowned King of Scotland by Isobel, sister of the Earl of Buchan. Bruce now embarked on a campaign to restore Scottish independence and this campaign took the English by surprise. Edward was suffering ill health by this time and instead of leading an expedition he gave different military commands to Aymer de Valence and Henry Percy while the main royal army was led by the Prince of Wales. The English initially met with success; on 19 June,

Aymer de Valence routed Bruce at the Battle of Methven. Bruce was forced into hiding, while the English forces recaptured their lost territory and castles.

Edward responded with severe brutality against Bruce's allies and supporters. Bruce's sister Mary was suspended in a cage outside Roxburgh in the Scottish Borders for four years. Isabella MacDuff, Countess of Buchan, who had crowned Bruce, was suspended in a cage outside of Berwick Castle for four years. Bruce's younger brother Neil was executed by being hanged, drawn, and quartered; he had been captured after he and his garrison held off Edward's forces who had been seeking Bruce's wife Elizabeth, daughter Marjorie, sisters Mary and Christina, and Isabella. Edward now regarded the struggle not as a war between two nations, but as the suppression of a rebellion of disloyal subjects. This brutality, though, rather than helping to subdue the Scots, had the opposite effect, and rallied growing support for Bruce.

In February 1307, Bruce reappeared and started gathering men, and in May he defeated Aymer de Valence at the Battle of Loudoun Hill. Edward, who had rallied somewhat, now moved north himself. On the way, however, he developed dysentery, and his condition deteriorated. On 6 July he encamped at Burgh by Sands, just south of the Scottish border. When his servants came the next morning to lift him up so that he could eat, he died in their arms, aged 68.

Various stories emerged about Edward's deathbed wishes. According to one tradition, he requested that his heart be carried to the Holy Land, along with an army to fight the infidels. A more dubious story tells of how he wished for his bones to be carried along on future expeditions against the Scots. Another account is more credible; according to one chronicle, Edward gathered around him the Earls of Lincoln and Warwick, Aymer de Valence and Robert Clifford and charged them with looking after his son Edward. In particular they should make sure that Piers Gaveston was not allowed to return to the country. This wish, however, the son ignored, and had his favorite recalled from exile almost immediately. The new king, Edward II, remained in the north until August, but then abandoned the campaign and headed south. He was crowned king on 25 February 1308.

Edward I's body was brought south, lying in state at Waltham Abbey before being buried in Westminster Abbey on 27 October. There are few records of the funeral, which cost £473. Edward's tomb was an unusually plain sarcophagus of Purbeck marble, without the customary royal effigy, possibly the result of the shortage of royal funds after the King's death. The sarcophagus may normally have been covered over with rich cloth, and originally might have been surrounded by carved busts and a devotional religious image, all since lost. The Society of Antiquaries opened the tomb in 1774, finding that the body had been well preserved over the preceding 467 years, and took the opportunity to determine the King's original height. Traces of the Latin inscription *Edwardus Primus Scottorum Malleus hic est, 1308. Pactum Serva* ("Here is Edward I, Hammer of the Scots, 1308. Keep the Vow") can still be seen painted on the side of the tomb, referring to his vow to avenge the rebellion of Robert Bruce. This resulted in Edward being given the

epithet “Hammer of the Scots” by historians, but is not contemporary in origin, having been added by the Abbot John Feckenham in the 16th century.

Those of us with Scottish sympathies are familiar with stories about the bravery of William Wallace and Robert Bruce and about the brutality of Edward I. This essay is designed to treat them as a triad, figureheads in the enmity between England and Scotland, without eulogy or vilification; three men with strengths and weaknesses who had successes and failures, and who have come to epitomize an undying tension.

My Scottish sympathy is anchored in my admiration for my great-great grandfather, John Ross McNaughton, who left Scotland for Australia in 1838 with his wife Agnes and his one-year-old daughter Jane [3]. The story above is prompted by my discovery that I am also related to several kings of England who fought against the Scots, including King Edward I “Longshanks,” who was my 22nd great grandfather, his son Edward II, my 21st great grandfather, and his son Edward III of Windsor, my 20th great grandfather. Those connections are detailed in another story [4].

The ancient enmity between Scotland and England was resolved, in a fashion, on 17 February 1908 in East Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, when Charles Robert McNaughton, with his proud Scottish heritage, married Annie Florence Carver, with her noble English background. On 17 December 1908 they had a son, Charles Dudley McNaughton. Dudley died of a brain tumor on 7 April 1944 at the age of 35, but his son, Kenneth John McNaughton, born on 22 July 1940, lived to tell the tale. And this is it.

REFERENCES

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3. McNaughton, Ken, Bergmeier, Diane, Bergmeier, Neville, John Ross McNaughton (1814-1885): His family, descendants and historic properties, 22 July 2010.
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