

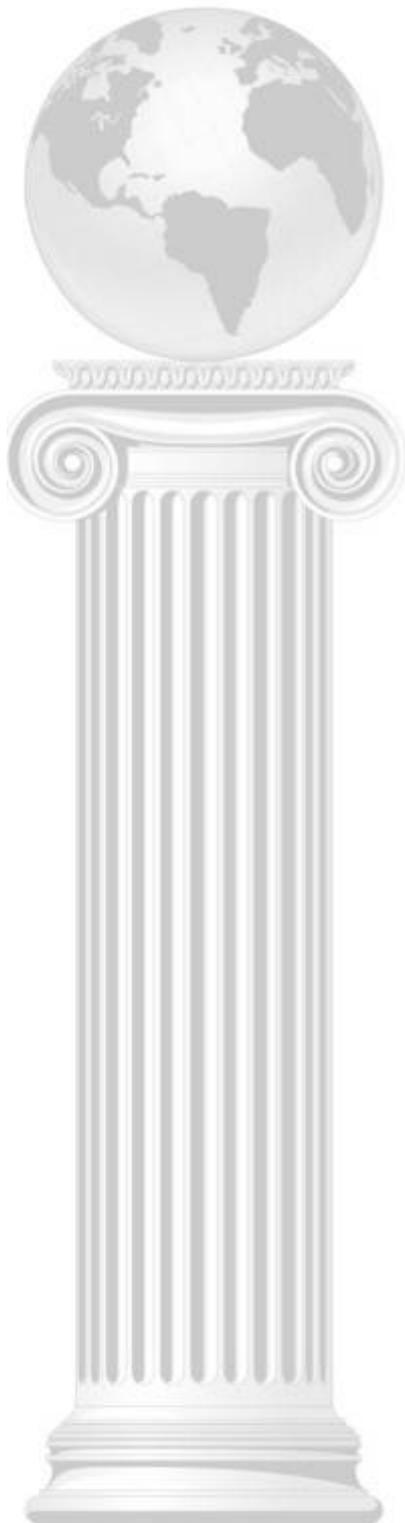
# SRA 76

700<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
of Bannockburn.

Special Edition



**1314 - 2014**



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The Bruce Statue on the Stirling Castle Esplanade, looking towards Bannockburn.

*The front cover artwork is a photo of the Bruce statue on the field of Bannockburn taken by the Editor.*

# The King Robert the Bruce Statue at Bannockburn.

The Laying of the Foundation Stone on the 20<sup>th</sup> May 1964.

By J.S. Donaldson.

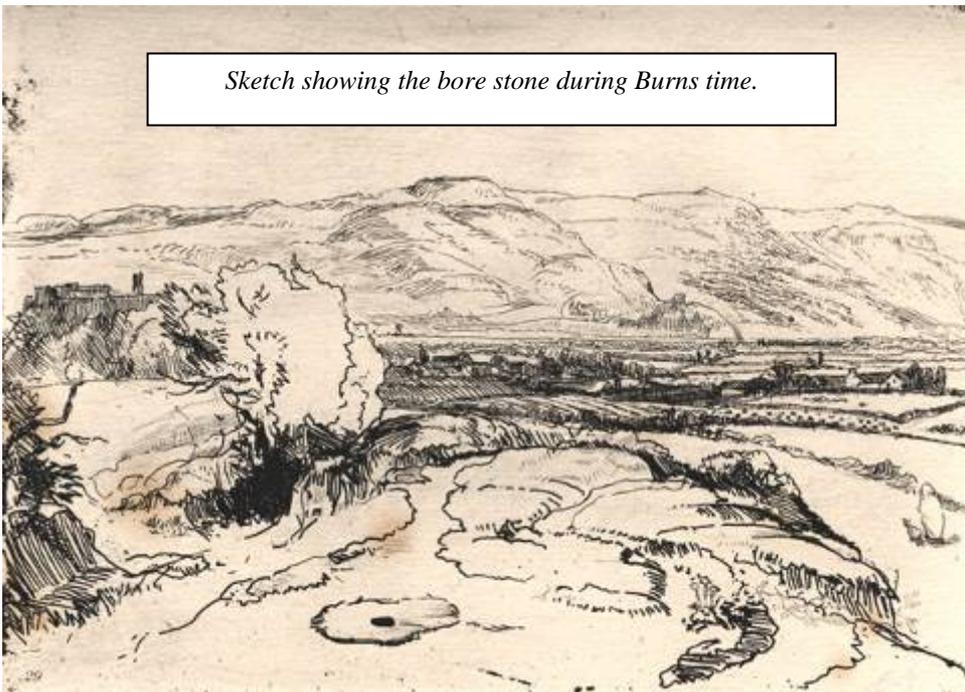
Three miles south of the Ancient Castle of Stirling lies the field of the Bannock burn, where, as every Scot knows the famous Battle of Bannockburn took place. Robert the Bruce, King of Scots had gathered together an army of approximately 9,000, the vast majority drawn from 'ordinary folk', to face the might of the English army of close to 25,000 professional soldiers, and on Monday morning the 24<sup>th</sup> of June 1314, the vastly outnumbered Scots lined up against Edward II's power, ready to 'do or die.' The Scots victory was decisive, and Bannockburn became the last and most important battle in the struggle to restore Scottish independence. Six years later in 1320 saw the famous Declaration of Arbroath and then in 1324 Scotland was at last recognised as an independent nation, and Robert the Bruce as its King.

650 years later, on the 24<sup>th</sup> June 1964 a statute of King Robert the Bruce was unveiled at the field of the Bannock burn by Her Majesty the Queen to commemorate the battle, but what is not so well known is that only a few weeks before on the 20<sup>th</sup> May, the Freemasons of Scotland laid the foundation stone for this magnificent memorial to the King of Scots.

For centuries after the Battle of Bannockburn, the site where the encounter took place was largely forgotten about, only locals knew of its whereabouts near the stream of water called the Bannock burn. No monument to the Scots who fought there was displayed and visitors to the area would be shown the field, the battle recounted for them and the only relic left on the battlefield pointed out, a blue whinstane. This 'Bore Stone' as it was known, was described in 1859 as being circular, measuring 3ft in diameter and 2ft in thickness with a hole 3" wide in the centre, in which legend has it, King Robert placed his standard on the morning of the battle. One famous visitor to the site was Robert Burns, who during his 'tour of the highlands' in 1787 noted in his common place book for the date, Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> of August;

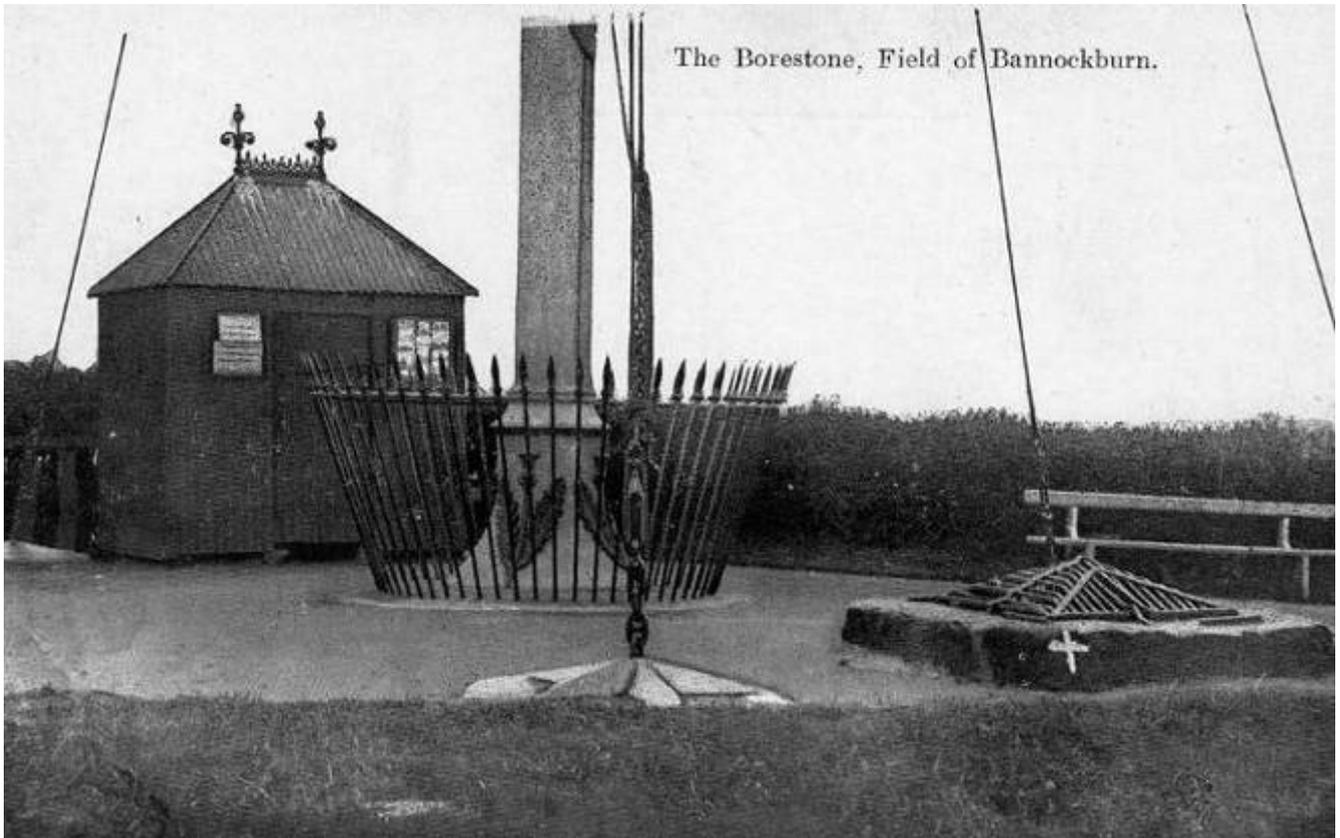
*Come to Bannockburn – The field of Bannockburn the hole where glorious Bruce set his standard. Here no Scot can pass uninterested. I fancy to myself that I see my gallant, heroic countrymen coming o'er the hill, and down upon the plunderers of their country, the murderers of their fathers ; noble revenge and just hate glowing in every vein, striding more and more eagerly as they approach the oppressive, insulting, blood-thirsty foe. I see them meet in gloriously triumphant congratulation on the victorious field, exulting in their heroic royal leader, and rescued liberty and independence.*

Sketch showing the bore stone during Burns time.



The stone at which Burns reflected, remained the only memorial to the Battle until 1870, countless thousands of visitors over the years stood at the same spot, but souvenir hunters from the Victorian era had chipped off pieces from the stone to such an extent that the local authorities acted to prevent any more damage to the old stone. What remained of

the Bore Stone was encased within an iron grating and a flagstaff was erected by the Dumbarton and Stirling Lodges of Oddfellows. The flagstaff can still be seen to this day, however, the iron grid containing the stone was broken into years later and parts of the stone were stolen, leaving some fragments. The pieces that were left were removed from the iron grille and placed in a case of armoured glass, sadly, in 1967 two of the larger fragments that remained of the ancient stone were stolen when the case itself was smashed open. What remains of the stone are left are held in the visitors centre.



*The flagstaff and old iron grille.*



*A piece of the Bore Stone.*

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**BAWBEE FOR BRUCE**

**£50,000 World Appeal to Scots**

A world appeal for £50,000 to erect a bronze equestrian statue of King Robert the Bruce beside the Borestone at Bannockburn was launched in Edinburgh yesterday by Lord Clyde, the Lord Justice-General, to coincide with the anniversary of the first day of the battle on June 23, 1314.

On the calculation that there are 25,000,000 people of Scottish birth or descent throughout the world, Lord Clyde suggested that a contribution of 2d per head, "a bawbee for Bruce," would meet the required sum, towards which Mr Roy Thomson has already contributed £3000.

The sculptor will be Mr C. d'O. Pilkington Jackson, A.R.S.A., Edinburgh, who executed much of the sculpture of the Scottish National War Memorial, and whose work is also to be seen in the Livingstone Memorial at Blantyre, St Giles' Cathedral, and Paisley Abbey.

Canadian Statuette

statuette of Bruce for Calgary, less

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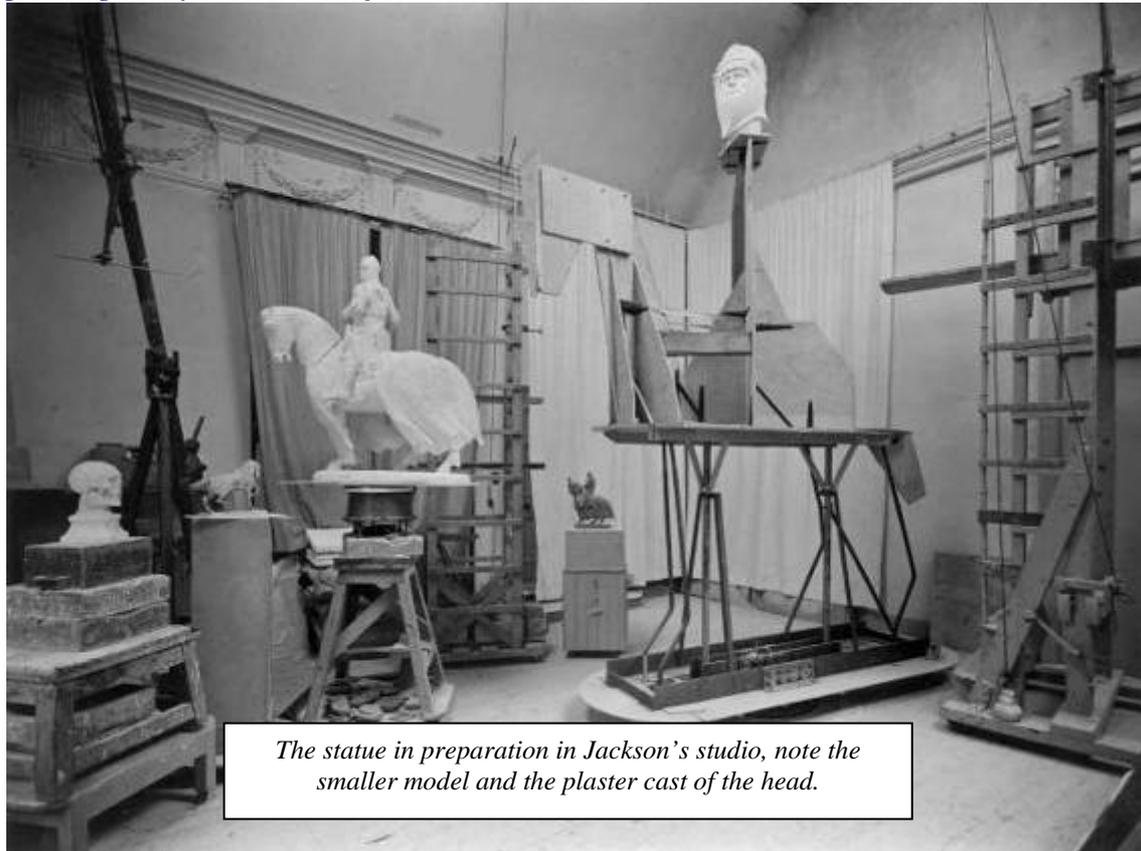
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*Glasgow Herald 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1961*

In 1961, an appeal called, 'A Bawbee for Bruce,' was launched in Scotland to erect a proper and fitting monument to King Robert the Bruce, the memorial would take the form of an equestrian statue of Bruce and be unveiled on the 24th June 1964, the 650th anniversary of the Battle of Bannockburn. The target was £50,000, however that figure proved to be unreachable, and a more realistic figure of £27,000 was set. But by the time the statue was placed on its plinth, there was a £5,000 shortfall, and although contributions were slow to come in, the final sum was eventually reached in 1967.

The man commissioned to sculpt the bronze statue was Charles D'Orville Pilkington Jackson, who set about forming the famous statue of the King of Scots astride his horse. Although in his mid 70's, Jackson worked on the statue 60 hours a week in his studio in Edinburgh, and used 3 tons of clay. His attention to detail was rigorous, he consulted dentists and surgeons and used a cast of Bruce's skull to get the face just right, eventually the clay model was completed, a plaster cast was taken off the figure and sent to the foundry to be cast in bronze. Unfortunately, the plaster form was returned to the studio as there was not enough money in the fund to pay for it to be cast. The Glasgow Herald of the period ran a piece in March 1963 about the Statue and the problems encountered with raising the funds, headlined,

*'Web of Tradition,' – 'People who have doubted the possibility, or advisability, of raising enough money to put the statue of Robert the Bruce on the field of Bannockburn might find reassurance in one lorry drivers experience. Some months ago he drove the plaster sections of the statue from Edinburgh to Cheltenham from where they will be cast in bronze. When he began unloading at the other end the first thing to catch his eye in the back was – a spider, spinning away at the end of a thread.'*



*The statue in preparation in Jackson's studio, note the smaller model and the plaster cast of the head.*

Jackson undaunted and determined to see the project completed went to Canada in to appeal to Scottish ex-pats living there, and made a secret agreement with Eric L. Harvie a rich Canadian who agreed to donate the sum required, in return for a second copy of the Bruce statue being cast and erected in Calgary, Alberta. Jackson agreed, and Harvie paid the outstanding money for both statues to be cast, Jackson's perseverance paid off, he donated half his fee to the appeal fund, the plaster cast returned to the foundry and the magnificent bronze statue to the King of Scots was finished in time for the unveiling ceremony on the 24th of June 1964 by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, the 650th anniversary of the historic battle.

But what is probably not as well known is that only a few weeks before the inauguration of the statue, the Freemasons of Scotland laid the foundation stone of the plinth on which the monument to King Robert the Bruce rests. The King Robert the Bruce Memorial Committee had invited the Grand Lodge of Scotland to perform the ceremony and on the 20th May 1964, the Most Worshipful Grand Master, Brother Lord Bruce a direct descendant of the King, laid the foundation stone in front of a gathering of about 1000 freemasons who had travelled from all over Scotland to take part in this historical event. The Brethren gathered at the nearby Whins of Milton school and marched in procession headed by three pipers to the site of the plinth. The grand Sword-Bearer Brother David Liddell-Grainger holding aloft the sword of King Robert the Bruce preceded Lord Bruce and the Grand Lodge Office-bearers, followed by Brethren of the various Lodges.

Before the ceremony, Lord Bruce gave a short address to the company;

*“They had met on a glorious evening to unite in a most ancient custom. He recalled that 102 years ago there had been a similar occasion at the monument to Sir William Wallace. Now, by the courtesy of the owners of the Borestone site, the National Trust for Scotland, and at the invitation of the King Robert the Bruce memorial Committee, they were able to pay tribute as masons to King Robert the Bruce. “It was on this spot 650 years ago, that Scotland united as never before under the leadership, which gave us liberty, and which only came from the exercise of courage. We have had peace as Scotsmen to dwell in our country, and to serve abroad.”*

Then the Act of dedication in the South, West and East was performed by Bro. the Rev H. O. Wallace the Past Grand Chaplain, after which the Grand Secretary Bro, Dr. Alexander Buchan placed a silver casket in the cavity of the foundation stone, which was engraved with the coat of arms of the Grand Lodge of Scotland, the dates 1314-1964, and three words – **COURAGE, LIBERTY, and PEACE**. Inside the casket was a parchment from the Grand Lodge of Scotland commemorating the occasion, along with two coins of the realm, one from 1964, and the other coin dated 1314. This coin of the time of King Robert the Bruce had been found in a church at Crieff when the church had been restored about 1864. Lord Bruce said of the coin;



*“My family were given this coin to hold in trust and we felt that it would be most proper to deposit it in the foundations of this memorial.”*

The foundation stone was then lowered into position, the assembled Brethren sang “All people that on Earth do dwell” and the ceremonial was concluded with the pouring of corn, wine and oil on the

foundation stone. The Grand Master Mason then addressed those gathered on behalf of the Grand Lodge of Scotland;

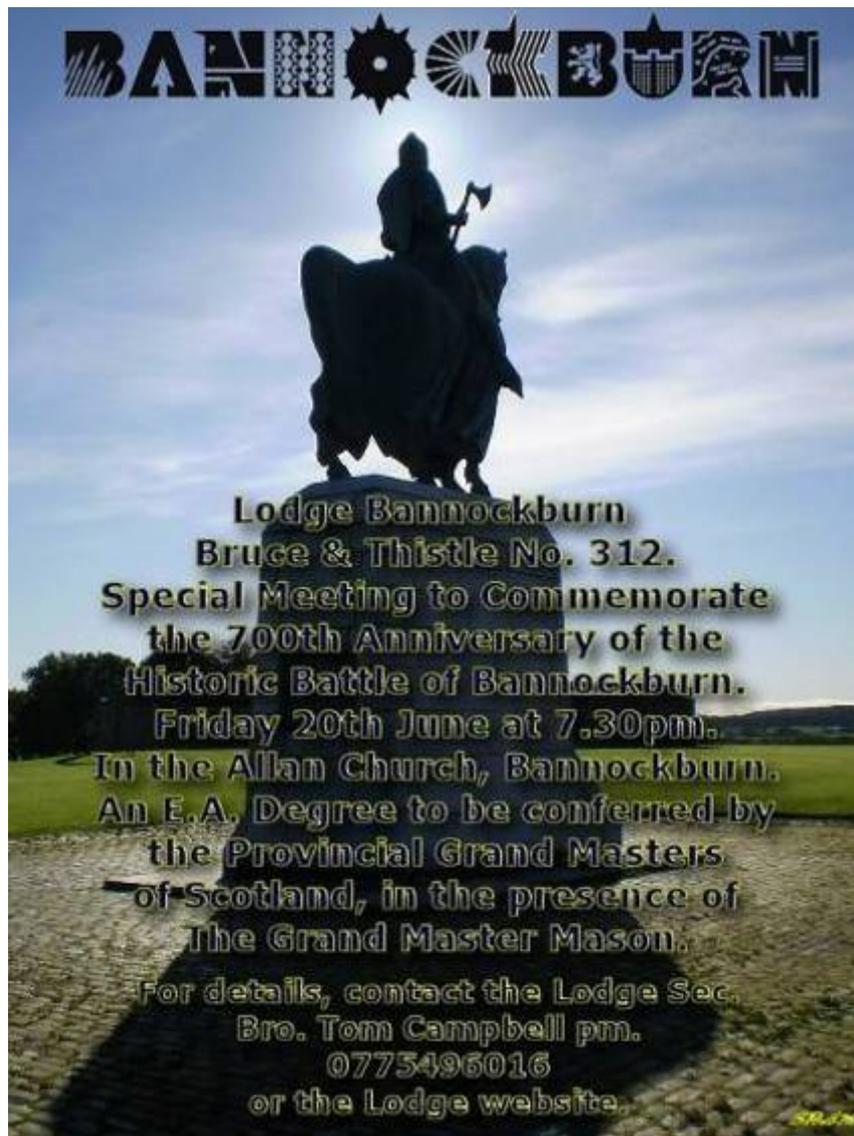
*“I would like to like to extend a number of thanks – particularly to the National Trust, to the King Robert the Bruce Memorial Committee, and to Mr Pilkington Jackson, for inviting them to perform the ceremony, and making it possible. He thanked the Provincial Grand Lodge of Stirlingshire for making the local arrangements, and particularly the Provincial Grand Secretary, Bro. Stuart Kennedy for the work he had put in preparing for the service. He thanked, too, the Grand Lodge Secretary, Bro. Dr Buchan, and his staff for all the arrangements made by them. Thanks were given to the organist Bro. A. Neilson, Lodge Stirling Royal Arch No.76, and to those who transported the organ to the site. The Police were also thanked. In addition, he thanked the brethren who had come from all parts of Scotland to take part in the ceremony. Lord Bruce said he hoped that what they had done that evening would enshrine their great heritage. He commended the fund, which was making the new Borestone possible and asked the brethren to consider what financial contribution might be made to it.”*

“Three cheers for the Grand Master Mason” were led by Bro. Sir Ronald Orr Ewing, Depute Grand Master, and Provincial Grand Master of Stirlingshire, and the ceremonial was ended. The Freemasons departed and went their separate ways, those present had taken part in a unique historical event, probably the last large public gathering for the laying of a foundation stone in Scotland, to the memory of the King of Scots, Robert the Bruce.



*Photographs of the laying of the foundation stone ceremony.*

On June 24th 2014, Scots from all over the World will gather together on the field of the Bannock burn to commemorate the 700th anniversary of the famous Battle of Bannockburn and the struggle for Scots independence. They will also celebrate the unveiling of the iconic statute of Bruce by Her Majesty the Queen which took place 50 years previous. And although no Masonic enactment of this historic event is planned, the Brethren of the local Lodge, Lodge Bannockburn Bruce and Thistle No. 312 have arranged a Masonic meeting to take place on Friday the 20th June 2014 when 19 reigning Scottish Provincial Grand Masters will 'work' an Entered Apprentice Degree in commemoration of the anniversary of the Battle. The Grand Master Mason has indicated that he will be in attendance at this historic gathering, and all Provincial Grand Masters have been invited also. The meeting will take place in the Allan Church, Main Street, Bannockburn FK7 8LY, tiling at 7.30 pm. The seating will be restricted to a maximum of 400, and should any Brethren like to attend an enquiry to the Lodge Secretary would be advisable who will be able to supply details regarding parking, changing facilities, etc. Contact can be made through the Lodge Bannockburn No. 312 website at <http://www.bannockburn312.co.uk/> or Bro. Tom Campbell PM secretary, on 07754946016. *(Please understand this event may be oversubscribed now, ed)*



*This article written by the editor of the newsletter was first produced in Scotland's Premier Masonic magazine, "The Ashlar" in the March 2014 issue. Permission to use the photographs from the 1965 GLOS Year Book was granted by the Grand Lodge of Scotland. Permission to use all others was granted by Historic Scotland. The Postcards are from the author's own collection. The picture of the statue on the front cover was by the author as was the photograph of the fragment of the Bore Stone and the shadow poster.*

*Sources;  
The Stirling Observer – June 1964.  
The GLOS Year Book 1965.  
Lodge Bannockburn Bruce and Thistle No. 312.  
The Glasgow Herald.*

# Bruce's Secret Weapon

By Archie McKerracher  
The Scots Magazine June 1991

Bannockburn is acknowledged as one of the most remarkable victories in the history of warfare. It is still almost unbelievable how Robert the Bruce's army of common folk, outnumbered three to one, took on the greatest war machine in medieval Europe and destroyed it so completely. But there are many puzzling aspects to the traditional story of Bannockburn. Firstly, Bruce's small army of around 6000 was composed mainly of foot soldiers. These were highly trained and highly disciplined at a time when infantry was usually poorly led and disorganised, and took a secondary role in battles. IN fact, the Scottish troops were of a calibre never found again in any battle between Scots and English. The four battalions of spearmen, each formed into a 1000 strong schiltrom, moved and fought as one. Each man would place his left arm upon the shoulder of the man in front until the schiltrom formed a homogenous mass through which no armoured cavalry charge could penetrate.

The small troop of light cavalry commanded by Keith carried out their orders to the letter, no more, no less. They cleverly anticipated the tactics of the Welsh archers who tried to pour arrows on the Scots' flank, as they had done at the Battle of Falkirk 16 years before, and quickly put them to flight. It was as though someone who had fought on the English side at Falkirk was now directing the Scots' strategy at Bannockburn.

It is curious that the Scottish soldiers were so well equipped. Each man possessed several items: a leather headpiece and steel helmet; a thick padded leather coat; a pair of protective and flexible steel gloves for holding the shaft of his iron-tipped 12 foot spear; and knives, axes and swords as personal weapons. Where did all this equipment come from and how was it paid for? Swords, weapons, and spear shafts were usually imported from the Continent and cost a great deal of money. Even at Culloden in 1746 many of the Highlanders were armed only with scythe blades attaches to poles.

Scotland in 1314 was a land wracked by 20 years of war. Its economy and its agriculture were laid waste. Many of the wealthy Lowland nobility were fighting on the English side How then did the Scottish army receive such extensive and expensive equipment when the English fleet controlled both the Irish and North Seas, and how was the equipment paid for when our treasury was empty? How, too, did Bruce devise the brilliant tactics of this set-piece battle when nothing in his previous record suggests he was anything more than a competent guerrilla commander?

It will be remembered that by mid-day on 24th June 1314, the 6000 Scots were utterly exhausted after fighting non-stop for eight hours in the summer heat. However, very few English had been killed by that time and only a small percentage of their 20,000 strong army had actually come into contact with the Scots. The steady pressure of the massed schiltroms simply pushed back the English armoured knights before they could move , penning the rest of their army behind them between the tidal Pelstream and Bannock Burns. Then came the renowned appearance of the Scots camp followers which caused the English ranks first to waver and then to break in panic.

It was really fear that destroyed Edward's army, but fear of what? Contrary to tradition, the so-called camp followers did not tie towels and blankets to poles and come running down Gillies Hill, and neither were they simply servants and cooks. The name of the hill and the story itself are 18th century inventions. Barbour's Bruce says they were yeomen with spears plus some lesser people who were stationed in the valley between Gillies Hill and Coxethill, through which the M9 motorway now runs. This then was part of the wooded New Park and so these 1000 men, mainly from Argyll, would not be visible until they reached the escarpment at St. Ninians leading down to the carse. Further, they were not

running, but marching in military order behind captains, and the move was not impromptu, but apparently anticipated by the Scots. Yet these newcomers alone would not have inspired such fear for their numbers and quality would have been identifiable at such short range.

I suggest that what broke Edward's army was the sight of the men who led them, perhaps no more than 50 or 60 in number; men who wore their close-cropped and their beards long; who wore chain mail, and over it a white smock, the famous cross patte. They marched beneath their black and white banner called The Beauseant, and were instantly recognisable to the front rank of the English as the Poor Knights of the Temple of Solomon, or Knights Templar, the Warrior Monks. They were renowned as the most battle-hardened, highly-trained and ferocious fighters in the realms of chivalry, yet strangely, their Christian Order had recently been condemned to Hell by the Pope and excommunicated in every country in Christendom - except Scotland.

The Order of the Poor Knights of Christ and the Temple of Scotland was founded in Jerusalem in 1118 by nine Crusaders. Its specific purpose was to keep the highways safe for pilgrims in the Holy Land, and in recognition of this worthy cause the King of Jerusalem, Baudouin I, gave them a wing of the royal palace. This was reputedly built on the foundations of Solomon's Temple and from this the new Order took its name. The Order of Solomon's Temple grew in size and the sons of European nobility flocked to join. New knights took an oath of poverty, chastity, and obedience and were highly trained in all aspects of warfare. They were forbidden to shave and wore white surcoats with the distinctive splayed red cross. They were obliged to fight to the death and never retreat. They combined religious mysticism with a reputation as ferocious fighters and became famed as the Warrior Monks, or Knights Templar.

Pope Innocent II in 1139 issued a Bull stating the Templars were responsible only to the Pope, and not subject to secular or church authority in any country. Gifts of land and money were showered upon the Order which soon developed into an international empire headed by a Grand Master. Money could be deposited with a Templar bank in Jerusalem and withdrawn in London on presentation of a chit and secret gestures. In fact, the Order is credited with inventing the cheque. The Templars had their own fleet which initially transported pilgrims and, later, all manner of goods. They also had their own armourers, architects, stonemasons, hospitals, surveyors etc.

In Scotland the Templars held vast lands, more than 500 properties in country and towns. David I had invited the Order to his kingdom in 1128 and kept a number of knights around his person, "retaining beside him the most noble brethren of the distinguished military order of The Temple of Jerusalem, he made them by day and night the custodians of his morals", according to a contemporary writer. They were also, no doubt, the custodians of his person.

All parts of Scotland, except the West Highlands, contributed heritable property to the Order. The principal Preceptory and Scottish headquarters was at Balantrodoch, now Temple, in Midlothian. The other Preceptory included Temple Liston, or Kirk Liston, near Edinburgh Airport; Temple Denny near Falkirk; Thankerton in Lanarkshire; and Maryculter in Aberdeenshire. The latter name derives from the Chapel of St. Mary, founded by the Templars in 1187 after William the Lion granted them 8500 acres there. Templars' Park at Maryculter is now the name of a Boy Scout camping and training ground.

Brain de Jay, (He was the model for the sinister Templar Brain de Bois-Guilbert in Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*) Master of the Templars in Scotland in 1298, brought north the large body of Welsh archers who fought in Edward I's army against William Wallace. The Welsh troops stayed first at Balantrodoch, the principal Templar base, before marching on to join the English army at the Battle of Falkirk in July 1298. During the battle it was Templars who directed the devastating arrow power that broke the Scottish spear schiltroms, and it was Templar Knights who led the final cavalry charge that destroyed Wallace's army. Templars in the British Isles came under the jurisdiction of the Master of the London Temple.

In 1291 the Holy Land finally fell to the Saracens with the capture of the fortress of Acre. The Templars defended the castle to the death after placing the women and children on the last galleys. The headquarters of the Order then moved to Cyprus, but with the loss of the Holy Land the Templars were obliged to find another reason for their existence. The Order was now unbelievably wealthy, dealing in commerce on a grand scale and lending vast sums of money to governments and kings. The headquarters in Britain were at The Temple in London where their typical circular church still survives. Here were kept the English crown jewels, pawned to the Templars in 1260 by Henry III to raise funds for his frequent warring expeditions.

However, as time went on the Templars became arrogant and dissolute and "to drink like a Templar" became a catch phrase. Strange rumours began to surround the Order. It was said the Knights repudiated the crucifixion, spat upon the cross and held all manner of obscene rituals. They had certainly absorbed both Judaic and Islamic beliefs, and esoteric knowledge, through their long connection with the Middle East and had adopted much that was alien to orthodox Christianity.

Their downfall came in 1306 when Philippe IV of France took refuge from a mob in the Paris Temple and was stunned by the wealth he saw. He was also aggrieved at being refused admittance to the Order and alarmed that the Templars intended forming an independent Kingdom in southern France. In October 1307, he ordered the arrest of all Templars in France. Many were hideously tortured although the Preceptor of France is said to have fled along with 18 of the Order's galleys and much of the Paris Temple's wealth. Pope Clement V was persuaded to excommunicate all Templars for heresy and ordered their arrest in every kingdom in Christendom.

In 1312 the Order was officially dissolved by the Pope, and in March, 1314 Jacques de Molay, Grand Master of the Order of Poor Knights of Christ and the Temple, was roasted to death over a slow fire on the Ile de Seine de Seine in Paris. The Order was finished.

In January 1309, Edward II of England ordered Sir John de Segrave, his appointed Guardian of Scotland, to arrest all Templars still at large in the country and report them to the Inquisitor's Deputy. This latter official was Bishop William Lamberton of St Andrews who had been released from Winchester Castle the year before, after taking a new oath of allegiance to Edward II, and had gone directly from there to Rome to visit the Pope.

Back home, the wily Lamberton paid lip service to the Pope's edicts and the English king's instructions, but remained totally committed to the cause of the excommunicated Robert the Bruce and Scottish independence. It is not difficult to imagine the bargain Lamberton made with the two important Templars he interrogated at Holyrood in December 1309. Far from questioning them on heresy, it is more likely he made them an offer; "Supply us with arms, money and expertise and we will give the Templars sanctuary in the only land where the Pope's writ does not run." Because of condition in Scotland the Papal Bulls were never proclaimed here and legally the Templars were never dissolved.

From that time on the fortunes of Robert the Bruce took a dramatic turn for the better. War material began arriving in Scotland from Ireland in considerable quantity. This is so alarmed the English authorities that Edward II issued an edict in 1310 to his officials in Ireland, "prohibiting under the highest penalties all the exportation of provisions, horses, armour, and other supplies from ports where any vessel touches ... to the insurgent Scots which he hears is carried on by merchants in Ireland."

There was, however, no arms industry in that impoverished country and the principal towns such as Dublin were in English hands, so where were all these weapons coming from?

Only the Knights Templar had access to such large quantities of armaments and they had extensive holdings in Ireland including at least six preceptories and 11 castles. Although some of the Irish

Templars were arrested in 1308 the rest seem to have moved to the country. It would have been a logical move for the Templar fleet, based at the French Atlantic port of La Rochelle, to slip away and sail to north-west Ireland. From there they could easily transport arms across to Scotland in secret. Certainly, the Templar fleet seems to have vanished completely along with the Preceptor of France and a number of Knights and lesser ranks and 50 horses. When the authorities later burst into the Irish Templar properties they found them empty of weapons, and as the historian H.Wood remarks in his tract "The Templars in Ireland," "It is extremely surprising to find the abodes of a military order so poorly equipped with arms." This was about the same period as Edward was complaining about the export of arms to Scotland! Thus there seems little doubt it was Templar arms that were being shipped to Scotland in Templar ships.

The logical route for a fleet sailing from north-west Ireland, and wishing to avoid interception, would have been into Loch Sween in Knapdale where Castle Sween had a substantial harbour, and arms could be transported over Kintyre for onward shipment. This area had recently been restored to sir Neil Cambell, Bruce's staunch ally, after Bruce had defeated the MacDougalls of Lorn at the Pass of Brander in August, 1308. It was an ideal location for refugee Templars to settle.

It seems more than coincidental that about this time a group of some carvers, known as the Loch Awe School, began work in this area and were responsible for the sophisticated stone carvings found in Argyll and the Western Isles, the earliest of which dates from the early 14th century. These carvings are unique in Scotland and of a remarkable quality for the period. It is also more than coincidental that many of the gravestones now gathered in Kilmartin churchyard from other churches in the area depict a simple carved sword, unmistakably the military gravestone of a Knight Templar. The sword emblem is unique to this part of Scotland as are representations of tau-headed staffs, used in eastern churches. At the little ruined chapel of Kilmory near Catle Sween is a Templar cross carved in stone, and another stone slab portrays a sailing ship of a size and design far larger than a west coast galley. The implication is that a group of immigrant artisans and craftsmen arrived in this area in the early 14th century and established themselves as stone carvers.

On the east shores of Loch Awe, just north of Ford and buried deep in forest, lies the ruins of Kilneuir Church. This is a strange building, barely marked on any map and yet of a beauty and size most unusual in the West Highlands. Information about it is very sparse. The stones are said to have been transported manually from a previous church at Killeven on Loch Fyne. Kilneuir was the principal church for the area until the mid- 16th century when the centre moved to Kilmichael Glassary. Most interestingly, the outlines of an earlier circular building can be traced on the west side, and this was the traditional design of a Templar church. Even more interestingly, a gravestone here bears the Templar cross patte.

Thus it seems likely that Bruce's army at Bannockburn was not only equipped by the Templars but probably trained by them, too. Bruce's dramatic encounter with de Bohun was an unheard-of move for someone trained in conventional European chivalry, but it was a manoeuvre common enough in the Middle east where the Saracens effectively used their nimble, smaller steeds against the steel-clad Crusaders on their heavy horses. Had Bruce been coached in that move and did he deliberately invite the attack to raise Scottish morale? (According to the Stella Templum Bruce was trained in the martial arts by Templars at Dalhousie in Midlothian, only a few miles from their headquarters at Balantrodoch)

Then there is the curious episode when Sir Alexander de Seton, a knight serving with the English, left Edward's army the night before the battle and brought the Scots vital information on the English forces disposition, size, and morale. Historians have long conjectured on the reason, but Seton had Templar connections and was undoubtedly acting under instructions.

After Bannockburn a few of the Templars and certainly many of their artisans seem to have remained in the area south of Loch Awe where they probably married into the local population. Some English and

Scottish Templars may have joined the Knight of St. John of Jerusalem, a still extant charitable institution, to whom was transferred all the Templar properties after their dissolution. However, these properties seem to have been administered on behalf of the defunct Order and were never officially granted to the Hospitallers of St John. As late as the 16th century over 500 properties in Scotland are recorded at Terrae Templarie, Templar Lands, and thus not officially belonging to the hospitallers.

There is no record of the Templars' part in Bannockburn probably because Bruce was anxious to become reconciled with the Pope, and Archdeacon Barbour who wrote the definitive Bruce in 1375 would certainly not have referred to them either as the very mention of their name was anathema to the church.

Did the Order of the Temple go underground in Scotland and continue as a secret society? It is said that when Graham of Claverhouse fell at Killiecrankie in 1689 he was found to be wearing a Templar smock and cross beneath his clothes.

Baignet and Leigh in their best-selling book *The Temple and The Lodge* trace the rise of Freemasonry from the absorption of Judaic and Islamic beliefs by the Templars, and also from architectural practices of the Middle east which the Templar artisans adopted. The Templar refugees in Scotland, particularly the stonemasons, passed on these traditions and secret rituals to operative stonemasons in Scotland and also to an elite body of the nobility. The authors suggest that Freemasonry was taken over by the Jacobites and used as a secret society dedicated to preserving the Stuart dynasty. Certainly, the earliest surviving minutes of Dunblane No. 9 Lodge, dated 1696, are signed by some of the principal Jacobite conspirators. It was for this reason that Grand Lodge, the ruling body of Freemasonry was founded in 1717 in London as a Hanoverian attempt to counter the Jacobite monopoly.

It is interestingly that the higher degrees of Freemasonry, particularly the older Scottish Rites, were in existence long before the formation of Grand Lodge and even today remains independent of that authority. Final proof of the connection between the Knights Templar and Freemasonry can be seen on a 14th century Templar gravestone at Kilmory chapel which quite clearly portrays a Masonic set square and a Templar cross.

So it seems the Templars who escaped persecution did flee to Scotland, bringing with them arms and expertise which secured Scottish independence. They brought with them, too, many traditions and beliefs from the Middle East which were preserved in Scotland and eventually adapted as modern Freemasonry. It is fairly generally accepted that Freemasonry began in Scotland and was exported to the Continent by the Garde Ecosse, the Scots Guard, the elite body guard of the French kings. Perhaps this small band of refugee Knights contributed as much to the heritage of the world as they did to Scotland's freedom.

The Scottish Knights Templar of the Chivalric Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem have a present strength of 150 selected members. They are a non-Masonic Order brought into the 19th century as the Militia Templi Scotia and are a repository of Scottish Templar tradition and relics of Jacobite Freemasonry. The Masonic Knights Templar, on the other hand, is one of the higher degrees of Freemasonry and was founded around 1810 as a specifically Christian Order.

The Scottish Knights Templar possess a secret and different version of Scotland's history which is contained in their *Stella Templum*, of which the above article forms part. The rest is considered too controversial for release at present. The Order have recently purchased Dull Church in Perthshire to hold the stone given into their care when St Columbia's Church in Dundee was closed in 1989. They believe this is to be the Stone of Destiny recovered from Westminster Abbey in 1950. It was found in Parliament Square, Edinburgh, in 1965 and given into the custody of the Rev. Mackay Nimmo of St. Columba's.

*This article is the author's own view, it is not necessarily the view held by the Editor of this magazine, before anyone reaches for their email.*

# Lodge Bannockburn Bruce and Thistle No. 312.

## A Short Historical Address.

"This night the Brethren in the house of Hugh Paterson met, for the purpose of electing Office-bearers, according to the request of The Grand Lodge of Scotland, and, having unanimously chosen John Banks President for the night's proceeding, the following persons were elected Office-bearers:

Thomas Crawford	Master
John Fergusson	Depute Master
William McAllister	Senior Warden
John Wilson	Junior Warden
James Dobbie	Treasurer
William Denovan	Secretary
John Banks	Steward
John McCulloch	Auditor
David McQew	Tyler



The above is the first Minute Book Record of the Bannockburn Bruce and Thistle Lodge numbering '312' on the roll of The Grand Lodge of Scotland and was recorded 175 years ago.

The Lodge has continued in the "Town," with the name of such great historic significance to Scotland, since that time.

Any organisation of men which has stood the test of time from just after the Battle of Waterloo to the landing of men on the moon must surely have contributed something worthwhile to the well-being of the community.

The nineteen founder members when they met first in the house of James Anderson, Innkeeper, Newmarket, Bannockburn, to hold a Lodge of Brethren assembled and to formulate in Bannockburn the high ideal which is the foundation of Freemasonry, may not have imagined that their Lodge, started also as a Friendly Society, would continue in strength and be on its way to the second century of its existence.

It is fitting after perusing the known Records and Minute Books of Lodge Bannockburn Bruce and Thistle to pay tribute to the historians of the Lodge represented by a long line of excellent Masters, Secretaries and Treasurers. Not all of the records are in copper-plate handwriting, for many of the early members were weavers and could not record the Minutes as men of letters.

But shining through the Records, however presented, is the fact that Lodge Bannockburn Bruce and Thistle has been ever-mindful of charity - with top priority always being given to the less fortunate brethren, in sickness or other distressed circumstances, their widows and orphans.

The basic industry in the village of Bannockburn at the beginning of the Nineteenth Century was the weaving of cloth. The occupations of 13 of the 19 founder members were Manufacturers (2), Weavers (8), Warpers (3). The fees due at this time on being initiated as a Fellow Craft and raised to the sublime degree of a Master Mason were ten shillings (50 pence), a not inconsiderable sum then.

The first name to be recorded as a member, dues paid, was Thomas Crawford, Plasterer, Stirling, the first R.W.M. as stated in the Minute of the first meeting on 6th November, 1824. It is probable he was connected with a Stirling Lodge and may have been the same Thomas Crawford who was R.W.M. of Lodge Ancient Stirling No. 30 in the year 1800.

There has always been some speculation on how the "Thistle" became incorporated, along with the natural desire to have the famous Scottish hero King Robert the Bruce forever linked with the name of Bannockburn.

It may be of some significance, in attempting to discover why "Thistle" should be chosen - apart from the more obvious connotation of its being one of the National Emblems of Scotland - to record this fact. Some of the early meetings were held at "Sister Denovan's" and her "Crown and Thistle" Inn was at the end of Newmarket.

Meetings, many of which were in the homes of members in the early days, were not so frequent as in recent times.

The first public parade of the Lodge occurred in December 1825 when the Brethren of the Lodge, accompanied by the Bannockburn Instrumental Band, paraded through the town prior to assembling for the first Festival of St. John.

The consecration of the Lodge took place on October 23rd 1827, almost three years after the charter was granted, with the ceremony being performed by Bro. John Prentice R.W.M. of the Stirling Ancient Lodge.

Lodge Bannockburn Bruce and Thistle's two sponsor lodges, The Lodge of Alloa and Lodge St. Andrew Denny and Loanhead were also in attendance as were Stirling Royal Arch and Stirling Rock Encampment.

But the brethren attended many more public occasions, particularly the laying of foundation stones.

Brethren of Lodge Bannockburn Bruce and Thistle attended such ceremonies as the new bridge over the Forth at Stirling in 1831; the Wallace Monument in 1861; the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary in 1870 and the Smith Arts Museum at Stirling in 1871.

Gifts to the Lodge from members were many in the early years and it is recorded that on the return from their visit to Edinburgh in 1870 one of the deputation, Bro. E.L. Wilson R.W.M., presented a handsome mahogany mallet with ebony handle and Senior and Junior Warden's Pillars.

The history of Scotland and the changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution can be traced from the Minute Books of the Lodge during the Nineteenth Century. The start of the working of coal in the local pits could be seen by the number of miners who joined the Craft.

There were those who joined the emigrating Scots who were to make new lives for themselves and families in Canada and Australia.

Many of these brethren were raised through all the Degrees to become Master Masons at one emergency meeting - a speedy arrangement also made for many members going overseas on active service.

The social and Harmony ideal of Freemasonry has never been neglected by Lodge Bannockburn Bruce and Thistle in going from labour to refreshment. The constantly changing social aspect can be traced through concerts, dances after Festivals of St. John, a cinematograph show, summer drives in charabancs, Masonic Balls and on to the present '312' Social Club.

After Lodge Bannockburn Bruce and Thistle had taken a Lodge Room on its own instead of meeting mostly in members houses the premises were frequently let to other organisations and societies to assist them in their formative years at the end of the Nineteenth Century. They included the Free Gardeners, the Y.M.C.A. for Sabbath morning meetings and also the let of the premises as a reading room.

The Lodge received help on many occasions from Bro. Col. Wilson, who owned the weaving mills for tartans in Bannockburn by providing storage space for Lodge possessions etc, and to other members of the Wilson Mills family.

In 1826 the Brethren attended the laying of the Foundation Stone of James Wilson's Mill. The exact location of this Mill is not known but could it have been the Royal George Mill Building in which the present Lodge Temple is situated? Indeed, there is a lintel in the building bearing the date 1826.

The Lodge considered the building of a new Temple at the close of the Nineteenth Century instead of renting a Lodge Room.

One of those rented and in use for many years was the building at the corner of Main Street and Kirk Wynd, near the old Ladywell Church, later the Murrayfield U.F. Church.

The Lodge decided, however, to rent as a hall the upper storey of the Old Town Hall and their first meeting in these premises was in February 1904.

During the Centenary Year of the Lodge (1924) the brethren were in the midst of negotiations to purchase the present Masonic Hall premises at the Royal George Mill and to raise money to renovate it.

This was probably why no Thanksgiving Service or Dinner was held in that Centenary Year. The decision was taken to combine the Consecration of the new Masonic Temple with the Centenary Celebrations the following year on 24th April 1925.

In a closely-knit community like Bannockburn, son has followed father into the Fellowship of the Craft during the 175 years of its existence as a Lodge. It is particularly interesting to trace names such as Wilson, Plank, Vallance, McQue (sometimes McQew), Morrison, Stevenson, Buchanan, Jaffray and Don appearing and re-appearing as generation succeeds generation throughout the Lodge's history.

To pick out just one of the above names, in December 1888 it was recorded that Bro. John Don, 84 years of age, had been a Freemason for 65 years. This pre-dates the Lodge by one year. In 1916 a presentation of a Gold Albert and Seal and a life membership certificate was made to Bro. George Don who had been the Lodge Tyler for 25 years.

The current R.W.M. is Bro. Alexander Don and his brother Robert is the W.S.W., both of whom followed their late father into the Lodge. Whilst it is not known if these two brethren are direct descendants of Bros. John & George Don, in a small community such as ours it is likely that some connection exists.

The Brethren of the Lodge have always been ready and willing to give a practical token of their sympathy to those in distress. When three Brethren died in the Plea Pit explosion in 1922 special payments were made to their wives or dependants.

In the immediate years after the Great War and again after the Second World War there were understandably many more candidates to join the Craft after long absences from home of serving men in the forces. Greater visitation between Lodges, no doubt because of improved transport in the motor car era, was also a feature of the post War years.

This short history is more of a sketch of its idealistic work during the first 175 years. Some happenings have been left unrecorded and names which might have been expected are not mentioned, because of some Minute Books not being available or perhaps through human oversight, but I hope that the inherent laudable intentions of the Brethren of the Lodge, down the years, to follow the precepts of the Craft, shine through it all and provide an inspiration to present Freemasons and to all who follow in the Bannockburn Bruce and Thistle Lodge No. 312.

# Andrew Bruce, 11th Earl of Elgin. Grand Master Mason of Scotland. 1961-1965

Interviewing Earl of Elgin  
by CLAUDIU IONESCU



I had the honour to meet again Lord Elgin in May, in Edinburgh. (*This was in 2009, ed*) The second edition of the International Conference on History of Freemasonry was held under the Special Patronage of 11th Earl of Elgin and 15th Earl of Kincardine.

It is difficult to be one of the most important Freemasons all around the world? When you've got a father that tells you what you've got to do, and then it all works out... That's quite simple.

How is a normal day for you?

It's a very slow start because we live in the countryside, and I would like to get around and see the farm and the trees and so forth... And there's always something that has to be organized. And that's a good part of most days.

Over and above that there would be correspondence from different parts of the world, as there is always some member of the family who wants to know something. And then you are asked your opinion on this or that, so I have a secretary for three days of the week, to deal with that kind of correspondence. That also includes things to do with my masonic work as well.

At this time of the year the grass grows and it has to be cut. I'm so slow on my feet, I was brought up in a tank in 1944, you see, so I take quite a long time to move around these days. So I have a lovely thing, grass-cutter, two good handles, two good driving wheels, it takes me around and I have a job to do. I take two or three hours cutting grass and that gives me my exercise!

Regarding masonic life, tell me, please, do you think nowadays the world needs Freemasonry like in the past?

When I joined Freemasonry, the Great War just finished and most men were accustomed to being together in the company of each other and so on. Thousands joined Freemasonry in Scotland. In my time as Grand Master, which is the 1960s, about 12-14000 masons joined every year. And although we had six or so hundred lodges at home, we had to consider a number of lodges across overseas. They also had a large membership. Nowadays also, we have a very considerable number of men coming in from the Armed Forces, soldiers, sailors and airmen.

Things have changed now because there are so many other things for men to do, and there are more responsibilities for the families, but the numbers are beginning to come back again, but you still will find a lodge in most villages in Scotland and most of them have their own accommodation, that is to say they have their own Lodge room, and so it's a part of the village life itself, because people get married in the Lodge room, people want to have a party and so they borrow the Lodge room. These are things that I grew up to, they're very much part of the local Scottish scenery.

It's different in the cities, where they've had to join together and probably use the same accommodation for their lodge meetings. But, there again, in the city, as you well know, many of the buildings are in the centre, therefore it takes you longer to come in from where you live and that's always a bit of a problem - in these recent years, people find it difficult to come in.

But, again, it depends on the character and the good humour, the efficiency of the way in which the lodges work - there'll always be people who want to enjoy, cause it's a great moment, they don't have to bother, because it's private, it's on their own, and they can talk about things that mean something to them, and find someone that they've never met before.

Now I'll tell you one of the most important things in Scotland in the modern age have been what we call the minibus, the vehicle that takes about seven or eight people. Lodges arrange for a minibus going 30, 40 - suppose 100 miles to a lodge meeting in a different part of the country. It's a marvellous way of people realizing how other people are living, at the same time, from town to country, countryside to countryside, highlands and lowlands. Believe me, the minibus has meant a great deal to Freemasonry.

I kindly ask you to tell us about your way to feel the Craft. Please, told us something about Scottish Masonry...

Freemasonry it's a private place of friendship, where there can be all these other aspects brought in, you can have somebody come and give a talk or something of this nature. You can ask for a neighbouring Lodge to come in and work. In Scotland, you see, Lodges do have a very considerable autonomy about what they actually work, they use very different words in certain parts of the ritual. The local dialects from the different parts of Scotland, it's quite different, even in, say 40-50 miles. And so it's fascinating to hear the work, of listening to it, words pronounced in a very different way and it's all rather fun.

Freemasonry has always been open to everybody, but it's privacy. It's a very different thing, and it is very important that men should have a private moment one with another.

I went to see a very old lodge in the north of Scotland, which is a mile from the place where the last battle was fought in 1746, the battle between Prince Charles Edward and the Gallant Horses. This lodge had been in existence four hundred years or so before 1746. And I asked to see their the original minute-book, and they said: well, no, cause it was in the bank, it was a long time, but I could see the second oldest book, and it started in the year 1700. It continued to the 1818 - it had the whole of the eighteenth century. Absolutely fascinating!

Now, it was a true operative lodge and they had what they called benevolent practices. And those were that at the end of the year, each year, they looked to the community to see who needed support. But, unfortunately, when the civil war broke out in 1746, things were too difficult. And the minute read: owing to the difficult nature of the times, the lodge adjourn till next year. In 1747: owing to the times being difficult, the lodge adjourn till next year. In 1748: the times having changed, we have reverted to our ancient benevolent practices. Down the one page were some 32 names of widows and orphan children and so on and what they needed. The sum was totalled. Down the other page were names of the lodge at work. And then after they joined Grand Lodge, it was a difficult correspondence, said they initiated a schoolmaster free. Gratis, in Latin, means free. He said he would write to the Grand Lodge.

These are things, I mean there are all kind of lodges in Scotland, but the simple ones, the ones in the heart of the country, you'll get tremendous fun, it's great. And then, the more sophisticated lodges in the city... It's a wonderful mixture!

*This article was sourced from the Masonic Forum Magazine who is the copyright holder, to whom out thanks go.*



**A Brief Historical Sketch  
by R.W. Bro. C.C. NISBET,  
Past Deputy Governor of the Order.**



The Royal Order comprises two Degrees, that of Heredom of Kilwinning and that of the Rosy Cross. Tradition tells us that the former was established in Judea, in Palestine, but whether at the time of the Crusaders or of much earlier origin, tradition is silent.

The word "Heredom" has been variously interpreted, but the most obvious derivation is from the Hebrew word "Harodim", meaning "The Rulers", and the name of Kilwinning refers to the re-establishment of the Order by King Robert the Bruce at Kilwinning, where he presided as its first Grand Master.

The Degree of Heredom of Kilwinning is a peculiarly interesting Degree and full of instruction to Craft Masons, as in its lectures it explains the symbolism and teaching contained in the first three Degrees of what is sometimes referred to as St. John's Masonry.

The Rosy Cross Degree, tradition takes its origin on the field of Bannockburn, on Summer St. John's Day 1314, and was instituted by King Robert the Bruce, who having in the course of the battle for Scottish independence, received assistance from a body of sixty-three knights who may have been original Knights Templar and Freemasons. He conferred upon them as a reward for their services the civil rank of Knighthood. Each received a characteristic considered descriptive of his performance at Bannockburn. He granted them permission to confer the honor on such Scottish Freemasons professing the Christian religion as had shown themselves worthy of the honour. The number on whom the Knighthood might be conferred was limited to sixty-three, but in years, owing to the large number of worthy Freemasons who coveted this honour, the Grand Lodge of the Order, when it found it necessary to establish Provincial Grand Lodges elsewhere than in Scotland, granted each Provincial Grand Lodge permission to promote sixty-three Freemasons of the Degree of Heredom to the honour of Knighthood under the Grand Lodge. In some of the Provincial Grand Lodges where the members of Heredom number many hundreds, special powers have been given to increase the number of Knights of the Rosy Cross. This degree, as its name implies, deals more with the subject matter of the Rose Croix Degree of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite than with that of Craft Masonry. The Degree of Knighthood can only be conferred in the Grand Lodge of the Royal Order, which has its seat in Edinburgh, or by special authority by a Provincial Grand Master or his deputy. This authority is purely personal to a Provincial Grand Master, and cannot be transmitted by him to his successors.

By the Constitution of the Royal Order, the King of Scots is its hereditary Grand Master, for whom at every meeting of the Order, wherever held, a vacant chair or throne must be placed at the right hand of the presiding officer. The acting head of the Order is the Deputy Grand Master and Governor, who appoints a Deputy Governor.

There are no reliable records tracing the history of the Order from its alleged revival in 1314 to the middle of the eighteenth century, when it appears to have flourished in France about the year 1735-1740 under the adherents of the Jacobite Cause, who being refugees from Scotland practiced these Degrees no doubt for the purpose of maintaining a common bond of union among them in a foreign land. It is stated

that in 1747 in a Charter which was in existence in 1840, granted by Prince Charles Edward Stuart to the Masonic Lodge at Arras, he described himself as Sovereign Grand Master of the Order of "Rose Croix de Herodim de Kilwinning".

The ceremonies of the Degrees are peculiarly interesting, being different from those of other Degrees of Freemasonry, and part of the Ritual is rendered in an irregular versified rhyming form. The original French manuscript of the Ritual, rendered in that language, is in the possession of the Grand Lodge of the Order in Edinburgh.

It should be noted that from a historical viewpoint The Royal Order of Scotland as a Masonic System is Senior to all other Degrees & Orders with the exception of The Degrees of the Craft (Blue) Lodges. Documentary evidence exists in its archives indicating this Order was active as early as 1741.

From France the Order seems to have been taken up in England, where it flourished for a few years, probably from 1741 to 1750, and on 22nd July of that year the Grand Lodge of the Royal Order of Scotland was reconstituted in Edinburgh, where it has ever since had its headquarters.

From that time the Order has continued to prosper. Many men, distinguished not only in Freemasonry but in other walks of life have held the highest office, and presided over the Order as Deputy Grand Master and Governor.

Originally, membership in the Order was limited to Scotsmen or those of Scottish descent, but latter the privilege was extended to Master Masons of other nationalities. The Order has now, besides Provincial Grand Lodges in Scotland and in England, Provincial Grand Lodges all over the world, including the United States of America where the Order is very highly prized, and is not conferred on any one who has not received the Thirty-second Degree of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, except by waiver from the Provincial Grand Master.

The Order is one which is, from its historical associations, peculiarly interesting to Scotsmen, and each year on the 4th of July (old style), the anniversary of the day on which the Battle of Bannockburn was fought, the Grand Lodge of the Order, as well as some of the Provincial Grand Lodges, continue the ancient custom of the Order by holding a festival, at which the Toast to the Immortal Memory of King Robert the Bruce, the hero of Bannockburn and Restorer of the Order is proposed in an oration by one of the Brethren, and honoured in silence. The Degrees of the Order are most beautiful and impressive, and inculcate the three great principles of Freemasonry — Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth.

*This article was sourced from the website of the Provincial Grand Lodge of the Royal Order of Scotland of the USA. Thanks go to them.*

### **Did you know?**

On his deathbed in 1329, Robert the Bruce asked that his heart should be carried into battle against the "Infidels" because he himself had not been able to go on a Crusade. Bruce's body was buried in Dunfermline Abbey and when it was exhumed in 1818 it was found that his ribs had been sawn through, indicating that his heart had indeed been taken from his body.

Sir James Douglas is said to have taken Bruce's heart in a casket with him to Spain in 1330 but, in a battle against the Moors, Douglas was killed. Sir William Keith brought Bruce's heart back to Scotland and it was buried in Melrose Abbey.

In 1921, during excavations beneath the Chapter House at Melrose Abbey, a conical leaden casket was discovered. It measured 10 inches high and was 4 inches in diameter at the base but tapering towards the top. It was pitted but otherwise in good condition.

The casket was reburied but in 1996, it was removed again from beneath the Chapter House floor and examined once more. Historic Scotland said "It is not possible to prove absolutely that it is Bruce's heart. But it is reasonable to assume that it is".

On 22 June 1998 it was reburied at Melrose Abbey. On 24 June (the anniversary of Bruce's victory at Bannockburn in 1314) a plaque was unveiled on the ground at the place where the heart now lies. The inscription on the stone, from Barbour's "The Brus" reads "A noble hart may have no ease, gif freedom failye" Translated, this reads "A noble heart cannot be at peace if freedom is lacking" It incorporates a carving of a heart entwined in the Saltire, the basis of Scotland's national flag.

# The Story of Scots Wha Hae

In July 1793. Robert Burns and his close friend from Dumfries John Syme, embarked on a tour of Galloway. Syme tells a somewhat romantic story of how the verses of Scots Wha Hae came to be composed by Burns during a thunderstorm on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August, Syme wrote;

*“I took him by the moor road, where savage and desolate extended wild around. The sky was sympathetic with the wretchedness of the soil; it became lowering and dark. The hollow winds sighed; the lightning’s gleamed; the thunder rolled. The poet enjoyed the awful scene – he spoke not a word, but seemed wrapt in meditation. ....What do you think he was about? He was charging the English army along with Bruce at Bannockburn. Hw was engaged in the same manner on our ride home from St. Mary’s Isle, and I did not disturb him. Next day (2<sup>nd</sup> August) he produced the following Address of Bruce to his troops, and he gave me a copy for Dalzell.”*  
Currie’s Life of Burns.

It maybe that Burns conceived the idea for the poem on that ride, and polished it up back home at Dumfries later that month, for he wrote to George Thomson about the 1<sup>st</sup> of September that year saying;

*‘You know that my pretensions to musical taste, are merely a few of Nature’s instincts, untaught and untutored by Art. For this reason, many musical compositions, particularly where much of the merit lies in Counterpoint, however they may transport and ravish the ears of you Connoisseurs, affect my simple lug no otherwise than merely as melodious Din. On the other hand, by way of amends I am delighted with many little melodies which the learned Musician despises as silly and insipid. I do not know whether the old air, ‘Hey tutti tatie’, may rank among its number; but well I know that with Fraser’s Hautboy, it has often filled my eyes with tears. There is a tradition, which I have met with in many places of Scotland, that it was Robert Bruce’s March at the battle of Bannockburn. This thought, in my yesternight’s evening walk warmed me to a pitch of enthusiasm on the theme of Liberty and Independence which I threw into a kind of Scots Ode, fitted to the Air, that one might suppose to be the gallant ROYAL SCOT’S address to his heroic followers on that eventful morning.*

There followed the poem, after which he added, ‘So may God defend the cause of Trust and Liberty, as he did that day! – Amen.’

Burns then added a postscript;

*‘P.S. I shewed the air to Urbani, who was highly pleased with it, and begged me to make soft verses for it; but I had no idea of giving myself any trouble on the subject, till the accidental recollection of that glorious struggle for Freedom, associated with the glowing idea of some other struggles, of the same nature, not quite so ancient, roused my rhyming Mania’*

Burns had set the song to an old traditional Scots air called, ‘Hey Tuttie Tattie, but Thomson didn’t like it, he thought it unworthy of the spirited words, ‘totally devoid of interest and grandeur’ and set about lengthening the last line of each verse and changing the tune to ‘Lewie Gordon.’ Burns at first accepted Thomson’s alterations in the spirit, altering them in a letter, adding “I have borrowed the last stanza from the common stall edition of Wallace”,

*A false usurper sinks in every foe  
And liberty returns with every blow,*

“a couplet worthy of Homer.”

Thomson replied to Burns; ‘One word more with regard to your heroic ode. I think, with great deference to the poet, that a prudent general would avoid saying anything to his soldiers which might tend to make death more frightful than it is. ‘Gory’ presents a disagreeable image to the mind; and to tell them “Welcome to your gory bed” seems rather a discouraging address, notwithstanding the alternative which follows. I would suggest -

*Now prepare for honour's bed  
Or for glorious victorie.'*

Burns was not at all pleased with Thomson's recommendations, and sent off a reply almost immediately; *"My ode pleases me so much that I cannot alter it. Your proposed alterations would, in my opinion, make it tame. I am exceedingly obliged to you for putting me on to reconstructing it; as I think I have much improved it. Instead of "soger! hero" I will have it "Caledonian! on wi' me!" I have scrutinised it over and over; and to the world some way or other, it shall go as it is."*

Thomson changed his mind and agreed with Burns, it was better as originally intended, although in the second volume of the work published by Thomson in 1799, the song appears set to the tune 'Lewie Gordon.' In the 1802 volume the song is published as Burns wanted, with his original words .

The song in its final form was first published anonymously in the 'Morning Chronicle' in May 1794. Burns had been offered a position as literary correspondent, but declined, he was worried that his politics might endanger him and his family. However, he sent a copy of his original Scots Wha Hae to the paper on the understanding that it was printed namelessly, saying, *"In the meantime, they are welcome to my ode; only let them insert it as a thing they have met with by accident and unknown to me."* Burns was concerned about the song and its content, so much so, that this was the only time the song was published during his lifetime.

Robert Burns wrote 'Scots Wha Hae' as a rallying cry, he tried to replicate the spirit of 'La Marseillaise' which had been written in France the year before and had been so successful in stirring the masses into revolution, perhaps Burns hoped that 'Scots Wha Hae' would serve a similar purpose. Both songs are so alike, Battle songs in defence of a country against a neighbouring invader, a call to arms, the bringing down of a tyrant and the vision of Liberty, in fact it's a song about one man's passion for the Scottish nation and its people.

The song could never have been attributed to Burns during his lifetime, for as we have seen he had much to fear, his health was failing, and imprisonment or transportation would have killed him. This radical song would have caused him to be tried for sedition, regarded as a traitor and he could have been executed by being hanged, drawn and quartered as that was still the penalty for treason. After the publication of the song, the Government regard 'Scots Wha Hae' as seditious and it was banned from being sung or performed in public, years later in 1820 almost 25 years after it was first published, 16,000 people protested in Paisley about inflation and unemployment, the band supporting the protestors were arrested and jailed just for playing Burns' Scots Wha Hae, such was the fear this song held for the establishment, and, as the authorities have long memories, you might not be surprised to learn that this powerful and passionate Scottish song written by our national bard continues to be suspect even to this day, especially when it was adopted by a political party as the song for Scotland's National Anthem. It's just a pity that Scotland's sporting establishment do not share this view and adopt this rousing and passionate Scottish battle cry for the supporters of the Scotland team, for to the Scottish people, that one song 'Scots Wa' hae' is worth more than a hundred Bannockburns!

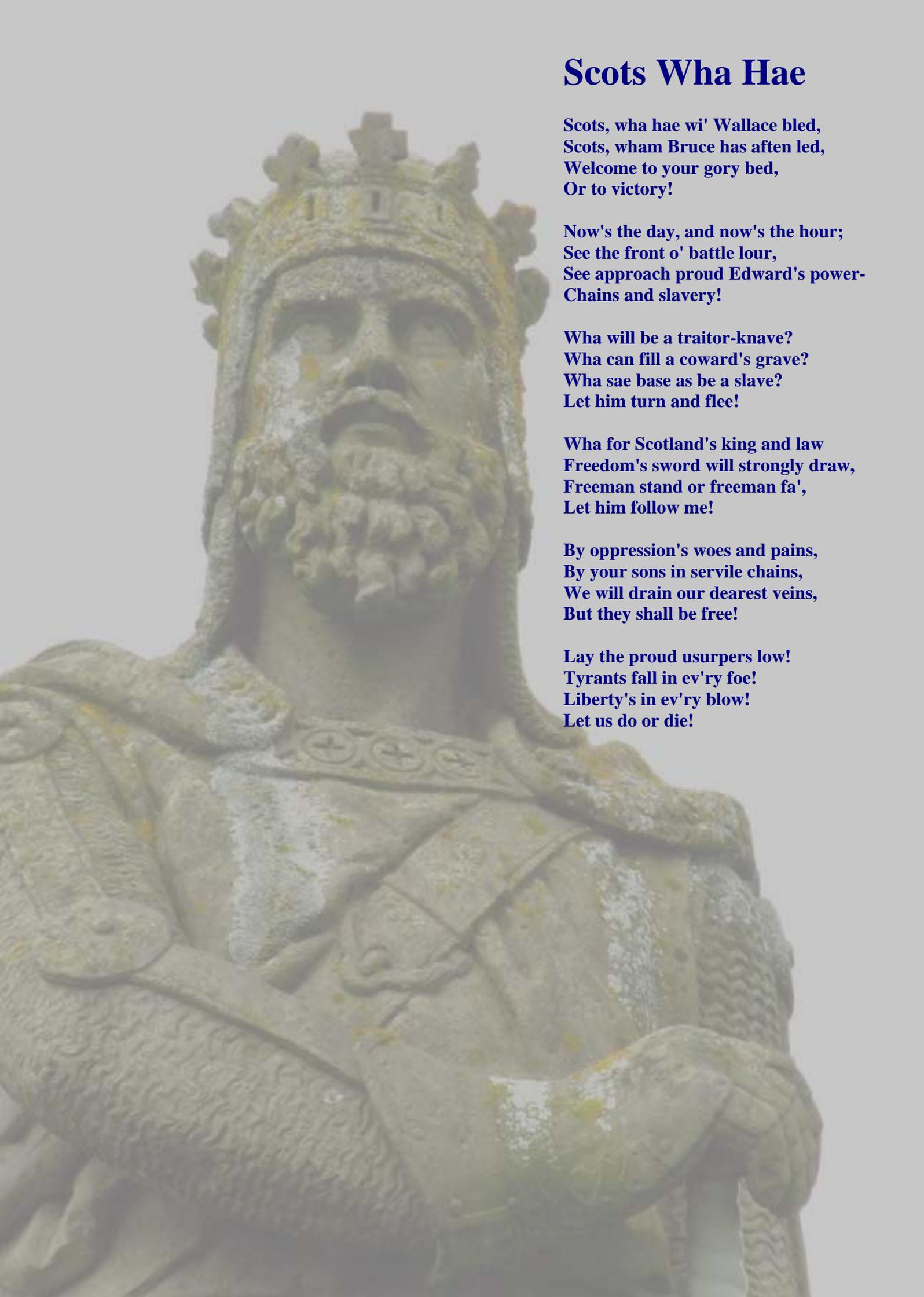
#### *Postscript*

The tune that Burns had set the poem to was one of the oldest Scottish melodies called 'Hey Tuttie Taitie, whether or not the tune was used at Bannockburn is impossible to say, but legend has it, the Scots marched into the Battle with the tune playing, however, there is an old document that says the tune was played as a march by Joan of Arc's Scottish Soldiers when she entered the City of Orleans in April 1429, and was known as a Scottish March then. It is played at the annual Joan of Arc memorial celebrations in the Town of Orleans, where it is called, 'Marche des Soldats de Robert Bruce.' (March of the Soldiers of Robert Bruce) *education Scotland*. Clicking the link below, will take to a short video of the tune as played at Orleans.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NLOq2VJnE0w>

(Also did you know, that Colonel William Travis told the story of William Wallace and recited part of Scots Wha Hae during the siege of the Alamo to Davy Crockett?)

*(This article is a shortened edited version of 'The Story of Scots Wha Hae' essay, by the author.)*



# Scots Wha Hae

Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,  
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led,  
Welcome to your gory bed,  
Or to victory!

Now's the day, and now's the hour;  
See the front o' battle lour,  
See approach proud Edward's power-  
Chains and slavery!

Wha will be a traitor-knave?  
Wha can fill a coward's grave?  
Wha sae base as be a slave?  
Let him turn and flee!

Wha for Scotland's king and law  
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,  
Freeman stand or freeman fa',  
Let him follow me!

By oppression's woes and pains,  
By your sons in servile chains,  
We will drain our dearest veins,  
But they shall be free!

Lay the proud usurpers low!  
Tyrants fall in ev'ry foe!  
Liberty's in ev'ry blow!  
Let us do or die!