

BATTLES, SIEGES AND REBELLIONS

A **battle** is when two armies fight each other. Battles can be organised in different ways.

Pitched Battles

A pitched battle is where the two sides agree a place and time to fight. The battles of Stirling Bridge, Falkirk and Bannockburn were all pitched battles in Scotland during the Wars of Independence.

Guerrilla Warfare

Another kind of military tactic, used by William Wallace and Andrew Murray and especially by Robert the Bruce, was guerrilla fighting. Instead of facing a large army at one time and place, guerrilla fighting involves small groups of soldiers slowly trying to wear down the opposing army by greater knowledge of the landscape and surprise attacks. It was a useful tactic if your army was small and the enemy had invaded your lands.

Siege

A siege is when an army surrounds a castle or town, blocking any people or supplies from getting in. Unlike battles, which are usually over in one day, sieges can last for weeks or even months as the people in the castle try to survive on whatever supplies they have left.

The siege might end because:

- the people who are trapped run out of food and water
- the enemy cannot maintain the siege any longer (perhaps because they run out of money or food themselves)
- military help comes to rescue the people who are trapped
- the people in the castle surrender and are taken prisoner
- an agreement is made to end the siege on certain terms
- the attackers break into the castle

Andrew Murray laid siege to Urquhart Castle in 1297. It was unsuccessful because the Countess of Ross brought an army to rescue the castle. Edward I besieged Stirling Castle successfully in 1304 from April to July.

Rebellion

Rebellion involves a group of people taking action to overthrow their rulers. Rebellions often begin with **uprisings** (also called **insurrections**), when people start to resist the actions of their ruler with armed force. An uprising turns into a rebellion when the rebels' aim becomes to overthrow the rulers. This often leads to a period of warfare between the rebels and those loyal to the rulers.

William Wallace and Andrew Murray both led uprisings in 1297, in different parts of the country, which turned into a full-scale rebellion against Edward I of England. Alexander of Argyll also led a rebellion in 1297 in the Western Isles against both Edward I and Alexander MacDonald (who remained loyal to Edward).

Below are some examples of battles, sieges and rebellions from the War of Independence, along with their sources which tell us what happened and what people at the time thought of the events.

ALEXANDER OF ARGYLL'S REBELLION (SUMMER 1297)

June 1297

Alexander MacDonald of the Isles writes to Edward I asking for help to defeat rebels who have caused much trouble in the Western Isles and in the north.

Alexander MacDonald to my lord, King Edward: greeting.

These are the wrongs committed by Sir Alexander of Argyll and his men against you at Elgin. On Alexander of Argyll's command, his men entered and laid waste to my lands. They killed all the men there and burned everything.

I received your command that all the nobles of the Isles and of Argyll were to be made subject to your rule, especially Ruairidh son of Alan who, despite my repeated persistence, refused to come to your peace. I managed to chase this Ruairidh down, although the rest of his men escaped in their ships. Ruairidh has sworn an oath and became faithful to you by producing a letter which he delivered to me. I have sent you this letter for your inspection.

Finally, Roland [a.k.a. Lachlan] son of Alan, Ruairidh's brother (who had personally sworn to be faithful to you in your court), came with a band of armed men with their banners raised towards my men serving in your army. Roland's men killed many of my men, and plundered their goods and ships. Roland also plundered your lands in Skye and Lewis, killing the men living on those islands, burning them, violently oppressing the women, burning servants within the sanctuary of churches, and making those islands so worthless that you will be able to gain little or nothing from your rent there.

I, on the other hand, am setting out with my force towards these pirates and disturbers of the peace in order to civilize and subdue those who, against your majesty, were prepared to carry out such deeds. I ask you to command the nobles of Argyll and Ross to come to my aid if I should have need of their assistance against these evil-doers.

And because I do not have my own seal at the time of composing this document, I have used the seal of Juliana, my wife.

ANDREW MURRAY'S REBELLION (SUMMER 1297)

Inverness: 24 July 1297

Important men in the North East of Scotland write to Edward I telling him about a rebellion which is happening around Moray, led by Sir Andrew Murray and others. They also tell the king that the Countess of Ross (a powerful noble woman) has been very helpful and that she is loyal to him.

Henry bishop of Aberdeen, John Comyn earl of Buchan, and Gartnait son of Gartnait of Mar, to our lord, Edward, king of England: greeting.

We write to tell you how an insurrection has recently come about in Moray and other neighbouring lands under Andrew, son of Sir Andrew Murray, and others. We are letting you know that we are determined to promote peace and to put down the insurrection, and maintain these areas. And we consider yours and our own forces to be adequate for this task.

We have advanced beyond the Mounth of Scotland, and have inspected it in

every place and sought out the evil-doers by means which Sir Andrew of Rait, the messenger of this letter, will very soon explain to you in more detail.

When we arrived at the town of Inverness, we sent a message to the Countess of Ross asking her to come and provide us with her own advice, power, and assistance for keeping the peace, in order to set royal justice in order so that she might gain your favour and thanks in the future.

She readily agreed to our request and placed herself in our charge. And since she was faithful and friendly, we bear true witness to her good standing and her efforts and devotion towards you. We believe she has true faithfulness towards you, which she can draw out or ask from her neighbours – the great, the middling, and the lowliest of people. We therefore recommend her as a most faithful person in all matters. This is proved by the true profession of respect and affection which she showed towards you at Inverness.

Inverness: 25 July 1297

Important men in the North East of Scotland report to Edward I that they are moving towards the place where the rebellion is happening in Moray, as he told them to do. They await further instructions from him.

Henry bishop of Aberdeen, John Comyn earl of Buchan, and Gartnait, son of the earl of Mar, sworn-men of our liege lord, Edward, king of England, to King Edward: greeting.

We inform you that Sir Andrew of Rait, your bachelor, carried your letter to the earl of Mar telling him to hurry to the north of Scotland to join the army of Bishop Henry and Sir Gartnait, because of a harmful war which had been raised in that part of the country by some of your enemies, who were breaking your peace. To contain and suppress this war, we are moving towards that area.

While we were at Launoy on the River Spey, on the Tuesday before the feast of St Mary Magdalene [16 July], Sir Andrew Murray met us with a very large company of rogues (Sir Andrew of Rait can tell you the number, according to what he has heard from the people of our company). And there these rogues entered a very great stronghold of bog and wood, where no horseman could be of service.

We inform you that the earl of Mar and his brother remain in the country you're the orders in your letter. Since it would be too long a business to write, we will report all of the events that have happened to you by our messenger, Sir Andrew of Rait, and we ask you to believe him as in these matters as he was present in person at all of these events.

And if it please you, you should be so good as to send your instructions with Sir Andrew.

25 July 1297

The keeper of Urquhart Castle writes to Edward I telling him that Andrew Murray and his men had besieged his castle. He praises the Countess of Ross for her help in relieving him.

The keeper of Urquhart Castle to my lord, King Edward: greeting.

When some evil-minded people joined Andrew Murray and Alexander Pilchys at Avoch Castle in Ross, the knight Sir Reginald le Cheyne wrote asking me to meet him at Inverness on the king's business on Sunday after Ascension Day [29 May].

As I was returning to Urquhart after the day's business, Andrew Murray and Alexander Pilchys with their accomplices wounded and took me prisoner. Then on

the Monday morning, Andrew and Alexander besieged Urquhart castle. The Countess of Ross sent a squire to me to say this was not her doing, offering her assistance to my castle but also advising me to surrender, which I refused to do. The squire then departed, leaving Andrew and his army, which included the burgesses of Inverness. I then saw the Countess's army, which she had sent to my aid under her son's command. I met and dismissed a messenger from the besiegers, and received help from the Countess's son in provisioning my castle.

Sadly, during a night assault, William Puer, Sir Alan and Richard, my son, were all killed. The besiegers drew away and went to the castles of Avoch and Balvenie and the woods there.

I praise the Countess highly for her assistance, and I beg that you will release her husband from imprisonment. Her son joins me in this request.

BATTLE OF STIRLING BRIDGE (11 SEPTEMBER 1297)

Berwick: 23 July 1297

Letter from Hugh Cressingham to Edward I, advising that an attack be made on William Wallace, who was in Selkirk Forest with a large company of men.

Sire, at Berwick on 14 July, I received two of your letters, delivered by John Brehille and William Ledbury, your messengers. The second letter says that if you could capture of the earl of Carrick [Robert Bruce], the Steward of Scotland [James Stewart], and his brother [John Stewart] (who are supporters of the insurrection), you would think your business in Scotland finished. You have given me the task of employing all my skill, using the money which you have sent me, and every other means in my power, to accomplish this.

Sire, before your letters reached me, I had been at Bolton moor in the county of Northumberland on the advice of your council (which was then at Berwick). On 10 July, the most important people of the county came to meet me there. We decided to make an expedition against the enemy on Thursday before the feast of St Margaret [18 July], as long as the army arrived at Roxburgh on Tuesday before that Thursday.

The army was assembled on the Wednesday in Roxburgh. We had 300 mounted soldiers and 10,000 foot-soldiers in total. And we would have made the expedition had not it been for Sir Henry Percy and Sir Robert Clifford, who arrived on the Wednesday evening in Roxburgh and told us that they had received all of your enemies on this side of the Scottish Sea [i.e. south of the River Forth] into your peace. We told them that even though peace had been made on this side of the Scottish Sea, it would be better to attack the enemies on the other side, or attack William Wallace, who lay there with a large company of men in Selkirk forest. It was decided that no expedition should be made until the arrival of the earl of Warenne, your guardian of Scotland.

If you do not know all the details about the peace, I send a full explanation under the seal of the bishop of Glasgow, along with a confidential letter of his, and a letter containing confidential matters which his clerk told me.

Sire, please do not be offended that I have delayed your messenger for so long: to tell the truth, I have been very annoyed that I have not been able to give you better news. I am keeping William Ledbury, your other messenger, with me (with your permission): I shall send him with better news after the arrival of the earl, God willing.

May God save and keep your noble lordship!

Stirling: 11 September 1297

Hugh Cressingham is killed at the Battle of Stirling Bridge, and skinned by William Wallace. (From the Chronicle of Lanercost Priory).

The Scots allowed as many of the English to cross the bridge as they could hope to overcome, and then, having blocked the bridge, they slaughtered all who had crossed over, among whom perished the Treasurer of England, Hugh Cressingham, of whose skin William Wallace caused a broad strip to be taken from the head to the heel, to make with it a belt for his sword.

Berwick: Monday 28 November 1300

An investigation is conducted in Berwick into Andrew Murray's son.

Report from an inquiry by 12 jurors before the sheriff of Berwick: it is found that Andrew Murray, killed at Stirling whilst fighting against the king, has a lawful son named Andrew, who lives in Moray among the king's enemies, as they believe. This Andrew is the next heir and was two years of age at last Pentecost [8 June].

Between 1306 and 1307

A man called William de Ros petitions Edward I for a reward for his loyalty.

William de Ros, brother of the late Sir Robert de Ros of Wark, to my lord, Edward, king of England: greeting.

When my brother [Sir Robert] joined the Scots, I myself refused to. I saved the castle of Wark-upon-Tweed for you my lord, who promised me a reward for this. When the earl Warenne and Sir Hugh Cressingham led the king's forces to Stirling to put down William Wallace and his band of evil-doers, after the keeper of Stirling castle and most of his garrison had been killed at the bridge, I threw myself into the castle with Sir William fitz Warin and Sir Marmaduke Thweng at the earl Warenne's command, but we had to surrender it for lack of provisions.

And then William Wallace spared my life on account of my being the brother of Sir Robert de Ros. But since I would not renounce my allegiance to you, my lord, Wallace sent me as a prisoner to Dumbarton Castle, where I lay in irons and hunger and danger of death till its surrender to you after the battle of Falkirk.

I ask you to grant me the little manor of Ballater, currently in your keeping, on account of my mother's death. This manor is worth £31 yearly [about £17,000 today].

BATTLE OF FALKIRK

(22 JULY 1298)

Carlisle: 25 September 1298

Edward I gives lands and castles to a loyal earl as a reward for his service to Edward. The lands are those forfeited by Scottish rebels after the Battle of Falkirk (22 July 1298).

Edward, king of England, to all his bailies and loyal men: greeting.

I announce that I have given to Guy Beauchamp, earl of Warwick, all of the castles and lands in Scotland which belonged to Geoffrey Moubray, my enemy and rebel, as a reward for the good service Guy has done for me.

I also give to Guy all of the lands belonging to John of Stirling, and the castle and land which belonged to Andrew Chartres, also my enemies and rebels in Scotland and which they held on 22 July 1298 [on the day of the Battle of Falkirk].

EDWARD I'S SIEGE OF STIRLING CASTLE (APRIL–JULY 1304)

St Andrews: 20 March 1304

Edward I writes to the sheriff of Stirling telling him to raise an army.

King Edward, writing from St Andrews, to the sheriff of Stirling: greeting.

I command you to bring to Castlecary [Lanarkshire] all the forces of your sherifffdom, both on horse and foot. These forces are to present themselves without delay before Sir Thomas Morham and Alwin of Callander, to whom they are to be obedient.

St Andrews: 20 March 1304

Edward I orders the keeper of Edinburgh Castle to make sure that his engineer has enough wood to repair the siege-engines.

King Edward to Sir John of Kingston, keeper of Edinburgh Castle: greeting.

I command you to see that Master Thomas, my engineer, takes all the timber he needs in the wood of Newbattle to repair my siege-engines at Edinburgh.

St Andrews: 21 March 1304

Edward I writes to his treasurer ordering money and supplies for his siege.

King Edward, writing from St Andrews, to my treasurer: greeting.

I announce to you my intention to besiege Stirling Castle. I therefore command you to bring in person to me all the money you can and to forward the stores along the sea coast to Stirling.

St Andrews: 30 March 1304

Edward I writes orders shields to be sent to Stirling in time for his siege.

King Edward, writing from St Andrews, to the keepers of Edinburgh and Berwick castles: greeting.

I order you to send all the great shields from your castles that you think are suitable for assaulting a castle, so that I have them upon my arrival at Stirling.

St Andrews: 31 March 1304

Edward I writes to his Exchequer telling him to send ingredients for a great fire and good arrows.

King Edward, writing from St Andrews, to my treasurer of the Exchequer: greeting.

I command that, as soon as you read this letter, you should see to it that a horse-load of cotton thread, a load of quick-sulphur, and another of saltpetre (that is, all of the ingredients for Greek Fire), and a load of arrows well feathered and fitted with iron heads, are provided from York and delivered to Stirling. And you should make sure these things have suitable transport so that they can be delivered to me quickly.

St Andrews: 1 April 1304

Edward I writes to some Scottish earls ordering them to stop their people from helping Stirling.

King Edward, writing from St Andrews, to the earls of Strathearn, Menteith, and Lennox: greeting.

I command you to prevent any of your people going to Stirling Castle, selling or buying provisions or merchandise, communicating with the garrison, or carrying any provisions to them.

Sandford (Fife): 9 April 1304

Edward I writes to the keeper of Linlithgow Castle, telling him that he is unable to send 30 men to attack Stirling Castle. William should give any information about the enemy to good men near Stirling so that they can all make a plan and act together. William should also send the great siege-engine of Linlithgow to the River Forth.

King Edward, writing from Sandford, to William of Felton (the keeper of Linlithgow Castle): greeting.

I have received your letter asking me to send 30 men-at-arms to harass the garrison of Stirling. But when your letter came, my men were scattered about looking for supplies, and before they could be assembled the time would come for me to move nearer to Stirling, which I intend to do shortly. Therefore I am not sending men-at-arms.

You should give your news and the enemy's plans to Sir John Comyn and other good men in that region. And you all, together with the garrison of Kirkintilloch and any others whom you can hire, are to do the best you can until my arrival. You should also send the great siege-engine of Linlithgow to the sea, with stones and other accessories, so that my men can find them quickly at the sea, ready to be loaded at whatever time I send them.

Kinghorn (Fife): 12 April 1304

Edward I writes to his son, Prince Edward, telling him to collect lead for the siege.

King Edward, writing from Kinghorn, to my son, Edward, Prince of Wales: greeting.

I command you to find as much lead as you can for my siege of Stirling.

Inverkeithing (Fife): 16 April 1304

Edward I writes to Robert Bruce, earl of Carrick (later King Robert the Bruce), thanking him for sending his siege-engines to Stirling and asking him to send a vital part of the great engine.

King Edward, writing from Inverkeithing, to the earl of Carrick: greeting.

I thank you for sending your siege-engines to Stirling. I ask you now to forward the rod of the great engine if you possibly can, for which I will send you help.

Culross (Fife): 17 April 1304

Edward I writes to his valet telling him that he is pleased he has captured Stirling Castle's boats.

King Edward, writing from Culross, to my valet, William Bisset: greeting.

I am pleased to learn by your letter sent through John Bisset, your brother, how you have captured the boats belonging to the garrison of Stirling Castle.

Outside Stirling Castle: 21 April 1304

Edward I writes to the keeper of Inverkip Castle (Renfrewshire), commanding him to send all iron from the siege-engines in Glasgow.

King Edward, writing from my position outside Stirling Castle, to Sir Robert Leyburn, keeper of Inverkip Castle: greeting.

Your people of the castle are ignoring the commands of my officers, especially regarding the siege-engines and stones for my siege of Stirling. Nothing has been done to remedy this situation, and my siege is being greatly delayed by this state of affairs. I therefore command you, on pain of a large fine, to tear off all the iron from the engines at Glasgow and send it to me with the main timbers and stones for the siege of Stirling without any excuse or delay.

Stirling: 20 May 1304

Edward I writes to some English sheriffs and the keeper of the Tower of London, ordering them to send him all the crossbows and arrows they have.

King Edward, writing from Stirling, to the sheriffs of York, Lincoln, Nottingham & Derby, and London, as well as Ralph of Sandwich, the keeper of the Tower of London: greeting.

I command you to send me all the crossbows and arrows in your keeping for my siege of Stirling Castle.

Stirling: 16 June 1304

An important English official writes one of his assistants in Scotland telling him to use money that he owes the king to pay people in Ayr for the meat the king bought from them. He should also buy more carcasses from them for the king who is at Stirling.

John of Droxford, keeper of the king's Wardrobe, to John of Yarm, clerk of James Dalilegh (the king's receiver in Scotland): greeting.

Since the king's rents in the county of Ayr for the last term are still in your keeping and the king owes money in those parts for carcasses of meat bought for his household, I order you to pay the good men of that district for these carcasses, so far as they can show they are owed money for them. You should then buy a further 100 carcasses or more with the rest of the money, and send them to Stirling by the next feast of St John [24 June] at the latest.

Stirling: 29 June 1304

One of Edward I's officials tells the keeper of stores at Berwick Castle to send food to Stirling for the king's horses.

I write from Stirling to you, Sir Richard Bromsgrove, keeper of stores at Berwick Castle.

The king has extreme need of oats and beans for his horses, and so I command you to send a vessel loaded with these goods to Stirling as fast as possible, because the king's horses have nothing to eat except grass. Therefore you should be quick about the business.

Stirling: 30 June 1304

Edward I writes to the sheriff of York ordering crossbowmen and carpenters.

King Edward, writing from Stirling, to the sheriff of York: greeting.

I command you to send crossbowmen and carpenters to my siege of Stirling Castle.

Stirling: 24 July 1304

A legal document is written stating that Stirling Castle has been surrendered by the castle keeper.

Public instrument declaring the surrender of Stirling castle by Sir William Oliphant, constable, and 25 men of his garrison.

Stirling: 30 July 1304

Edward I writes to the keeper of Scarborough Castle, telling him that he should receive prisoners from a ship taken from Stirling Castle.

King Edward, writing from Stirling, to John Sampson, keeper of Scarborough castle: greeting.

I command you to receive from John Balant, captain of the ship 'The Catherine', several prisoners taken at Stirling Castle. The prisoners are: William Scott of Dundonald, John O'the Hill of Fauside, John Taylor of Gobysky, and Henry of Stirling. You are to allow them 2 pence each [£4.30 today] daily for their food.

July 1304

A woman called Evota petitions Edward I asking him help her get her lands back which she lost during the siege of Stirling for helping the English army.

Evota of Stirling to King Edward of England.

I inform you that, during the siege of Stirling castle, I helped your garrison by obtaining provisions for them from the surrounding countryside. On account of my actions I was denounced by the Scots, who threw me into prison for ten weeks, and at the end of that term in prison they made me renounce the country and banished me. All of this can be witnessed by the garrison men who are now your archers.

I ask you for a letter to the chancellor of Scotland, putting me back in possession of my property in the town of Stirling, which I held at the time of the siege and which was taken from me because of my service to you and your garrison, and also that my fellow countrymen should not harass me.

November 1306

Receipts for various things bought during the siege of Stirling.

From the account book of the keeper of the king's Wardrobe:

Diggers: To Master Peter Cirugico, for diggers making a ditch at Stirling by the king's command, for 8 days from 24 April 1304: 53 s. 10d. [about £1,400 today].

Lead: To Master Peter Cirugico, sent to take the roof off Dunfermline church for taking lead for the king's engines at Stirling in 1304 and for the wages of men bringing that lead to the siege of Stirling from various places, in May and June 1304: £4 [about £2,000 today].

Hides: To Gilbert Haunchis of Dumbarton, for 12 tanned hides bought by him and the provosts of that town for the engines, at 22d. [£47 today] for each hide: 22s. [£570 today].

Iron: To William Fichet of Aberdeen for 40 pieces of iron bought from him for the siege of Stirling: 10s. 3d. [£265 today].

Iron: To Thomas the ironsmith, of St Andrews, for iron for the siege of Stirling: 7s. [£181 today].

Coal: To John the smith, for carrying sea-coal from the sea to the forges of St Andrews, for the siege of Stirling: 18d. [£40 today].

Iron and coal: To Walter the smith, for iron and coal bought by him from John of Clackmannan for the siege of Stirling: 12s. 4d. [£320 today].

Medicine: To Master Peter, the king's surgeon, for ingredients bought to make medicine for the king in the war.

DEATH OF JOHN COMYN

(10 FEBRUARY 1306)

February 1306

Receipt of a payment to a man for strengthening the king's castles (because of Bruce's rebellion) on the way back from telling the chamberlain about John Comyn's death.

Payment made to William of Hawick, chaplain, going from Dumfries to meet the chamberlain of Scotland near Lanark, in order to tell him of the death of John Comyn. On his return he caused the king's castles to be fortified because of the rebellion of the said Robert Bruce.

March 1306

Receipt of a payment to friars from London going to Dumfries to find out if the death of John Comyn in a church was true.

Payment to John of Winton, clerk, sent by the king to the Friars at London for sending 2 friars to Dumfries to make an inquiry into the death of John Comyn. For expenses for 10 days from 5 March: 23s. 9d. [£615 today]

March 1306

A letter to Edward I telling him that Robert the Bruce has taken control of many castles (Dumfries, Ayr, Dalswinton and Tibbers).

My lord, I inform you that the earl of Carrick [Robert the Bruce] now holds the castles of Dumfries and Ayr and the castle of Dalswinton, which belonged to John Comyn, and the castle of Tibbers, which belonged to Richard Siward. And Bruce holds this Richard and William Balliol in prison.

March 1306

An English spy writes to Edward I telling him that Robert the Bruce has started a rebellion in Galloway (South West Scotland). The spy thinks that Bruce is now trying to make himself King of Scots, and he hears that Bruce is on his way to Scone to be crowned.

My lord, I write to you with news that the earl of Carrick [Robert the Bruce] has made war in Galloway. The earl of Carrick has been at Glasgow and Rutherglen and has received the oath of loyalty from the people wherever he has arrived. The wicked bishop remains at Glasgow as his chief adviser. I understand that the earl of Carrick is attempting to seize the realm of Scotland and to be king.

On the day that this letter was written, John of Menteith informed me that the earl of Carrick had crossed the water [the Firth of Clyde] with 60 men-at-arms. The Saturday before this letter was written, the earl of Carrick came to Glasgow and the bishop gave him full forgiveness for his sins, made him swear that he would live under the direction of the clergy of Scotland, and freed him to secure his rightful inheritance [i.e. the Scottish crown].

They had a meal together and the earl left in the direction of Menteith to cross the River Clyde. And when he came to Dumbarton he ordered Alexander Lindsay and Walter Logan to demand the surrender of the castle, and that John of Menteith should go out under truce to talk with them. John would not agree to come out of the castle, but allowed the earl to come under truce so close to the castle that John could hear from inside what he wanted to say. The earl demanded the surrender of the castle and John replied that he held it by the king's commission and he would not surrender it except to the king.

10 April 1306

Charter of Edward I after Robert the Bruce crowned himself king of Scots. Edward I gives all of Bruce's lands to his (Edward's) daughter and her husband because Bruce is now a traitor.

I, King Edward, have given to Humphrey de Bohun, earl of Hereford and Essex, in return for his good and praiseworthy service, and to Elizabeth his wife, my daughter,

the castle of Lochmaben and all the lands in Annandale previously belonging to Robert Bruce, formerly earl of Carrick.

Bruce has forfeited these lands for his crime in seditiously and treacherously slaying John Comyn of Badenoch in front of the high altar of the church of the Friars Minor at Dumfries, and so committing sacrilege.

The land is to be held by earl Humphrey, his wife, and their heirs under all kings of England. Failing such offspring, the land should be given back to me and my successors.

July 1306

Receipt of a payment to a messenger taking letters round the country announcing the sentence against Bruce for killing Comyn.

Payment to Alan, messenger, for his expenses going from Berwick to Perth and Stirling to carry letters of the Friars Minor concerning the public sentence made against Robert Bruce and his accomplices.

Lazenby (Yorkshire): 30 July 1306

Record of the sentence to hang John Seton, who helped Robert the Bruce kill John Comyn and take control of the king's castles.

John Seton was captured in Richard Siward's castle at Tibbers, which John was holding against King Edward for Robert Bruce, a traitor.

John is to be drawn and hanged for aiding Robert Bruce in the murder of John Comyn in the church of the Friars Minor at Dumfries, in contempt of God and the most Holy Church, and against the king's peace.

Between August and November 1306

Records of payments made to messengers for taking letters authorised by the Pope against Robert the Bruce and those who were present at John Comyn's death: Alexander de Lindsay, Christopher Seton, and his brothers John and Humphrey.

Payments made to messengers taking two letters to the Irish bishops, sealed by the archbishop of York and the bishop of Carlisle, who were appointed by the pope to give a sentence against Robert, earl of Carrick, and the knights Alexander de Lindsay, Christopher Seton and his brothers, John and Humphrey, who were present at the death of John Comyn.

BATTLE OF METHVEN (19 JUNE 1306)

July 1306

Receipt for a messenger who told Edward I the news that the English army (led by Aymer de Valence) had defeated Robert the Bruce at the Battle of Methven in June.

From the account book of the keeper of the king's Wardrobe:

Payment to Laurence Somer, messenger of Aymer de Valence, for bringing the king news of the battle between the English and Scots at Perth. Delivered by Laurence's own hand to the king at Northampton in July: 100s. [£2,500 today].

1 August 1306

Edward I writes to his judges, telling them the sentence against a criminal called Bernard Mowat. Bernard is sentenced to be hanged for fighting with Robert the Bruce at the Battle of Methven, for killing some of King Edward's officers, and for burning churches in Scotland. Bernard, along with other Scottish prisoners, was executed four days later.

King Edward to my judges: greeting.

I inform you of the charges and sentences relating to a certain prisoner: Bernard Mowat is condemned for being in the conflict between Aymer de Valence, my lieutenant in Scotland, and Robert Bruce, on the Sunday before Midsummer's day that year [19 June], and bearing arms against my army, fighting in the field between St Johnstone of Perth and the town of Methven, and criminally slaying some of my men there who were taken on the field, and slaying Roger de Tany, my valet, in Selkirk forest, and burning and destroying churches in Scotland.

Bernard has appeared before the court and is sentenced to be drawn and hanged. He has no lands or possessions.

31 August 1306

Receipt of payment to a knight for losing his horse in the Battle of Methven.

From the account book of the keeper of the king's Wardrobe:

Payment to Sir Philip Mowbray for a horse lost in the battle at Perth in the company of Aymer de Valence: 40 marks [about £12,000 today].

24 November 1306

Edward sends a prisoner (Sir Malcolm of Innerpeffray) to England. He is to be imprisoned in the Tower of London for fighting with Robert Bruce at the Battle of Methven. Malcolm's two horses are given to the Treasurer of England to sell, keeping the profit himself.

King Edward to his treasurer: I send to you my prisoner Sir Malcolm of Innerpeffray.

At the time of the most recent rebellion of the Scots, Malcolm was my sheriff of Clackmannan and Auchterarder. Nevertheless he was one of the first to join Sir Robert Bruce and wickedly encouraged the earls of Menteith and Strathearn in aiding Robert. He also fought against me at the battle of Perth [i.e., Methven], and has done all the damage he could.

I command that Malcolm be secured in some strong castle, not in irons, but body for body [i.e. with a guarantor as a kind of hostage].

A, I permit you to have and profit as you wish from Sir Malcolm's two horses.

July 1307

Receipt of payment to John Comyn, earl of Buchan (cousin of John the Red Comyn, killed by Bruce in 1306), fighting with Aymer de Valence (leader of the English army) against Bruce at the Battle of Methven.

From the account book of the keeper of the king's Wardrobe:

Payment to John Comyn, the earl of Buchan, sailing from Berwick to meet Aymer de Valence at Perth before the battle of Methven:

In money: £7 [about £3,000 today]

In wine: 3 tuns

In oats: 5 chalders

BRUCE'S SIEGE OF ELGIN CASTLE (APRIL 1308)

April 1308

The sheriff of Banff tells Edward II about the trouble Bruce has caused in the North East of Scotland, in particular the siege of Elgin Castle.

Duncan of Frendraught, sheriff of Banff, to my lord, King Edward: greeting.

My earlier letter to you was intercepted. I now send details of Robert Bruce's campaign in the north during the past winter, ending with his renewal of the siege of Elgin Castle on Palm Sunday [13 April] 1308.

1 May 1308

John Mowbray writes to Edward II telling him he has ended the siege of Elgin Castle by Robert the Bruce.

John Mowbray to my lord, King Edward: greeting.

I report that I have relieved Elgin Castle, which had been besieged by Robert Bruce. I recommend Duncan of Frendraught [the sheriff of Banff] to you for his good services to me.

BRUCE'S REBELLIONS IN THE SOUTH WEST (1307-1313)

Lenton (Nottinghamshire): 30 September 1307

King Edward II commands his deputy in Scotland to put down Robert Bruce's rising in Galloway.

Edward, king of England, to John of Brittany, earl of Richmond, my lieutenant in Scotland: greeting.

I command you to march to Galloway to put down Robert Bruce, as John de St John, Dougal Macdowell, Donald son of Can and other great men there have written to tell me that Bruce and his accomplices are burning and plundering, and inciting and compelling the inhabitants to rebel.

I have commanded the following men to aid you with their forces: Patrick, earl of Dunbar, John of Hastings, John son of Marmaduke, Robert of Keith, Alexander of Abernethy, Henry Sinclair, Alexander de Balliol, and John de Vaux, and also John, baron of Wigtown and Richard le Brun, keepers of the peace of Lancaster, Cumberland and Wesmorland, with Roger Heron and Simon Ward, keepers of the peace of Northumberland and Tynedale.

Soon after 11 March 1309

John of Argyll writes to Edward II, telling him how Robert Bruce has attempted to invade his lands, and asking for help. He also claims Bruce was spreading false rumours that John had submitted to Bruce.

John of Argyll to King Edward: greeting.

I received your letters on 11 March, for the content of which I greatly thank your majesty. I was on my sick-bed when they reached me, and had been for half a year.

Robert Bruce had approached my territories with 10,000 or 15,000 men both by land and sea. I had no more than 800 to oppose him, 500 of these guarding my borders. What is more, the barons of Argyll gave me no aid whatsoever.

Yet, though we were fewer in terms of power, Robert Bruce asked for a truce from me, which I granted him for a short space of time, and received the same from him in return, until your majesty sent me support.

I hear that Robert, when he came, was boasting and saying that I had come to his peace when he told me that many others were rising in his aid, which God and I know is not true. Should your majesty hear this from others, you are not to believe it, for I am and will ever be ready to serve you to the utmost of your power.

I have three castles to guard and a loch 24 leagues long on which I have vessels properly manned, but I am not sure of my neighbours. As soon as your majesty or your forces arrive, I will be ready with lands, ships and others to aid you, if sickness does not prevent me. But if it unfortunately does, I will send my son with his forces to your majesty.

Dumfries: 14 July 1312

An English spy writes to Edward II telling him about Robert the Bruce's Parliament at Ayr and plans to attack England and castles.

My lord, since I left you at York, Sir Robert Bruce has held a Parliament at Ayr and intends to send Sir Edward, his brother, with the greater part of his forces, into England, while he himself attacks the castles of Dumfries, Buittle and Caerlaverock, remaining there and sending his light troops to plunder the North for their support.

7 February 1313

Record of the surrender of Dumfries Castle to Robert the Bruce.

The castle of Dumfries was surrendered on 7 February 1313 to Sir Robert Bruce by Sir Dougal Macdowell [constable and sheriff of Dumfries].