

TRANSPORT

There were two main ways to move around in the medieval period.

By sea

Sailing was the fastest way to move around, across seas and on rivers. Armies used ships to attack other countries because they could take all of their supplies and weapons on the ships. Merchants would also use ships to move between markets buying and selling goods. Because ships were so good for transport, people liked to live near big rivers like the River Forth (Stirling), River Tay (Perth), River Dee (Aberdeen), River Ness (Inverness) and River Clyde (Glasgow).

By road

There were no smooth roads to travel on like there are today. However there were well-known routes that were used by people to travel through Britain. These would have been used by the king (to travel around his kingdom), his messengers (to take letters to the king's subjects), by drovers (people moving herds of cattle to sell at the market), and by pilgrims (people walking a long distance to see a religious place). Occasionally there would be impressive stone sculptures from ancient times along these routes.

Most people would have travelled these routes on foot. Some would have a cart with them to carry all of their belongings. Those who could afford it would ride on horse-back.

Below are examples of the **cost of travelling** in style and on King Edward I's business, and of Edward I's use of **the sea for moving supplies** quickly. There are some maps of **Edward I's victorious journey through Scotland** in the summer of 1296 after he defeated the Scottish army at the Battle of Dunbar on 27 April. There are also examples of **armies crossing the Forth**. This was made more difficult because of very boggy ground north of the River Forth. The easiest way to travel across the Forth was by boat at Queensferry or by the Earl's Ferry (between North Berwick and Earlsferry, near Elie in Fife). As a result, people thought of Scotland north of the Forth as an island linked to the rest of Britain by Stirling Bridge. (See Matthew Paris's map of Britain, about 1250, in the resource on Maps.) Finally, there is a list of **prisoners transported by barge to Berwick** in 1306.

COST OF TRAVEL

Edinburgh: 5 June 1289

The Guardians of Scotland tell the chamberlain to pay a woman's travelling fees. (She was obviously travelling in style!)

The Guardians of Scotland to the chamberlain: We command you to pay Ela of Garioch, wife of the late Andrew of Garioch, £10 [about £5,000 today] for her expenses in travelling from beyond the Mounth [the mountains between Aberdeenshire and Angus and the Mearns] to Stirling and back.

London: August 1305

Travelling from London to Scotland on the king's business: expenses for carrying William Wallace's body from London to Scotland. (From the records of the king of England's government.)

John of Lincoln and Roger of Paris, sheriffs of London, state that they have paid 15 shillings [about £350 today] to John of Seagrave in the month of August in the 33rd year [1305] for the transport of the body of William Wallace to Scotland.

March 1306

Travelling from London to Scotland on the king's business: 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]

MOVING SUPPLIES BY SEA

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: 31 March 1304

Edward I writes to his Exchequer telling him to send ingredients for a great fire and good arrows as quickly as possible. (We can guess that 'suitable transport' means going by boat.)

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.

Sandford (Fife): 9 April 1304

Edward I writes to the keeper of Linlithgow Castle, telling him that he should send the great siege-engine of Linlithgow to the Firth of Forth.

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

... 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.

July 1307

Receipt of payment to John Comyn, earl of Buchan (cousin of John the Red Comyn, killed by Bruce in 1306), for bringing men by sea to fight 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:

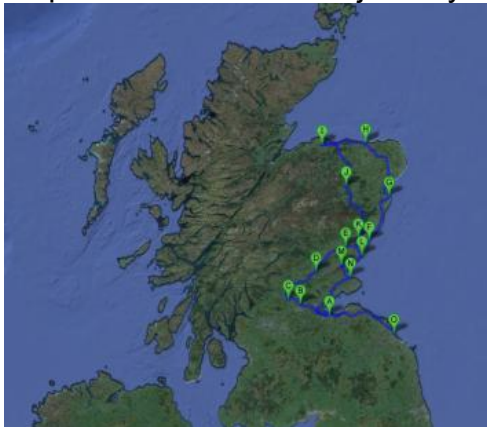
In money: £7 [about £3,000 today]

In wine: 3 tuns

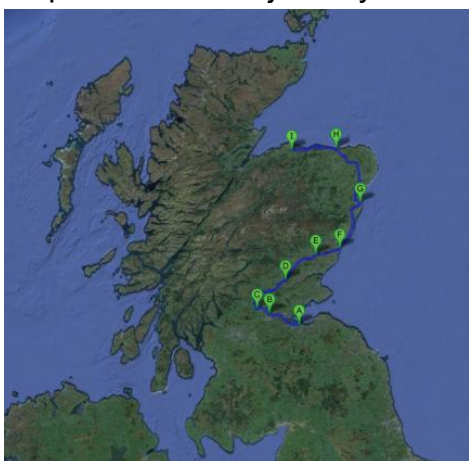
In oats: 5 chalders

EDWARD I'S VICTORIOUS JOURNEY THROUGH SCOTLAND (1296)

Map of Edward I's entire journey



Map of Edward I's journey North



Map of Edward I's journey South



ARMIES CROSSING THE FORTH

Before February 1304

Letter from the countess of Lennox to King Edward, asking for help because John Comyn has come from north of the Forth with a large force and has attacked her people.

Margaret, countess of Lennox, to Sir Edward, king of England, lord of Ireland and duke of Aquitaine: greetings.

My liege, I note that Sir John Comyn has sent part of his army across the Forth into Lennox to destroy and ruin those people who have come into your peace. I pray that you send your counsel with aid for the rescue, governance and support of those who have come to your peace. It is said that the army has come with a hundred mounted men and a thousand foot soldiers, and they reached Drymen in Lennox on the Sunday after Michaelmas [29 September].

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.

Dunfermline: 2 March 1304

Edward I commands the earl of Dunbar to watch the enemy closely and thoroughly. (The enemy is William Wallace and others who did not take part in the general surrender to Edward I on 9 February 1304.)

King Edward to the earl of March [the earl of Dunbar], greeting:

I understand that you are delaying dealing with my enemies until they leave the area, and I am astonished that you proceed so slackly.

But I now require you to move to the area around Dunipace, the Torres [Torwood] and the Polles [Carse of Stirling]. From there you should watch the enemy as best as you can, using your own troops and those of the district, so that the enemy should not by any means be able to reach Stirling Castle, nor come near you without their great loss....

I am about to leave Dunfermline, on my way towards St Andrews. The country around that place is now so empty of inhabitants and forces that those of the castle of Stirling may attempt to cross the River Forth to do some damage on this side. I therefore wish that you make sure the enemy is carefully watched, for if they make such an expedition across the Forth, I think that they would surely lose some of their men on their return, either through you who could come in their rear, or by your other people who guard the country there in front of the fords of the river.

TRANSPORTING PRISONERS BY BARGE

Between February 1306 and July 1307

Record of payments made by the chamberlain for expenses of Bruce supporters who have been captured and brought by barge to Berwick.

Payment made to the keeper of Berwick Castle for expenses of the following people captured at various times and places and sent as prisoners by Aymer de Valence [Edward I's commander in Scotland] to them:

- a chaplain and two boys of the bishop of St Andrews
- the abbot of Scone and a clerk
- Bernard de Alemaunde, John Dynaunt and four others
- German merchants (taken in parts of Dundee)
- Malcolm Lockhart and John of Blair
- the countess of Buchan and her maid
- Mary Bruce and her maid
- Niall Bruce
- the knights Alan Durward and Alexander Murray
- the clerk Alexander de Monymusk
- Patrick Skene
- Adam Chaplain and a boy

All these people were delivered to the master of the barge called 'le Messenger' of Berwick by Aymer de Valence, who ordered them to be taken to Berwick in his barge.