

AFTER William Wallace: SCOTLAND'S HISTORY

In 1298 after the disastrous defeat on the Scots at Falkirk Wallace was caught and executed, and the English hung his head from London Bridge.



Edward III

The Scots' spirit was still unbroken, and they soon found another great champion in Robert the Bruce. The last great battle in the war for independence was fought in 1314 at Bannockburn near Stirling Castle. There Bruce won the battle against the English forces led by Edward II., "Longshanks" 'son.

In 1328 Edward III formally accepted Scotland's independence.

In the later Middle Ages, Scotland suffered from weak kings and powerful nobles. For two centuries there was a constant struggle between the Crown and the nobles. Border clashes with England also continued. James IV of Scotland married Margaret, daughter of Henry VII of England, in 1503. When Henry VIII went to war with France in 1512, however, James IV invaded England. He fell, "riddled with arrows," at Flodden Field in the last great border battle (1513).



His son James V followed. When he died in 1542 the throne went to his infant daughter, Mary Stuart who was eight days old at that time. Because of her infancy, her French mother was chosen as regent, and she sent Mary to France in 1548. Mary lived as part of the French royal family.

In April 1558 she married the Dauphin Francis; she secretly agreed to leave Scotland to France if she should die without a son. In July 1559 Francis succeeded his father becoming King Francis II and Mary became Queen of France as well as of Scotland. In addition, many Roman Catholics saw Mary Stuart as Queen of England after Henry's firstborn daughter Mary I died and the Protestant Elizabeth I took the throne in November 1558.



Mary Stuart



Mary and
Elizabeth

Mary Stuart's claim to the English throne based on the fact, that she was the grand-daughter of Margaret Tudor, sister of Henry VIII - Elizabeth's father. To the Roman Catholics, Mary's claim appeared stronger than Elizabeth's because they thought that Henry's marriage to Anne Boleyn as illegal. Mary's young husband Francis II died in December 1560 after a reign of 17 months. Mary, who was about to become 18 years of age, was left in a difficult position. Unwilling to stay in France and live under the domination of her mother-in-law she decided to return to Scotland and take her chances with the Protestant reformers.

On 19th August 1561, Mary returned to Scotland. She accepted the Reformed (Presbyterian) church and allowed it a modest existence but not full establishment. The Protestant reformers were horrified because she had Mass in her own chapel, and the Roman Catholics were worried about her tolerance. For the next few years Mary tried to please the Protestants and be a friend of Elizabeth. In 1565 Mary married her first cousin Henry Stewart, Lord Darnley on 29th July.



Elizabeth I

AFTER William Wallace: SCOTLAND'S HISTORY



David Rizzio

This marriage to Darnley became unhappy and she refused him the right to be king if she died without children. Alone and disappointed, Mary turned to her Italian lover, who was killed in her presence. Mary, who was six months pregnant, survived.

In Edinburgh Castle on 19th June 1566, far from her husband and his friends, she gave birth to her son James.

On 10th February 1567 Darnley was murdered at Kirk o' Field; the circumstances of his death remain a mystery to this day.

Mary married again but the nobles didn't like her new husband. She was imprisoned at Lochleven Castle and in the same year her son became King James VI of Scotland.



With the help of a few brave friends, Mary escaped from the castle. She decided to leave Scotland and go to England to ask for support from her cousin Elizabeth. Mary never returned to Scotland. She was sent to prison because Elisabeth thought she wanted to kill her. On 8th February 1587 she was beheaded.

Her words: "In my end is my beginning."

Mary Stuart's son, James VI, became King of England when Queen Elizabeth I of England died in 1603. This is an important point missed by many historians - it was the Scottish king who took over the English throne, not the other way round. In England he was called James I.

Both nations were now united under a single king, but Scotland remained a separate state with its own parliament.



James VI

The fight between Protestants and the Catholic Church went on. Charles I, who was James' third son, became king in 1625.

When Charles I was killed the Scots welcomed Charles's eldest son as Charles II. When he died in 1685 his younger brother became King James II.

His firstborn daughter Mary married William III, King of England. She died when she was 32. Mary's sister Anne became Queen after William's death.

Meanwhile the Protestant Church was the official church in Scotland.

The age-old rivalry between Scotland and England ended formally in 1707 when the parliaments of both nations agreed to the Act of Union. This act established the Kingdom of Great Britain.

Scotland now had free trade with England and the colonies. During the following years the Scots also established colonies in America, Canada and Australia.

From that time on, the history of Scotland goes with that of the rest of the United Kingdom, but Scots continued to play a part in the world.

In the last referendum concerning the independence of Scotland in November 2018, they voted NO.

84.59 % of the people voted.

55.3 % said NO. 44.70 % said YES.

