

SOCIAL STUDIES — SCOTTISH HISTORY · P5–P7

Raibeart Brus — Robert the Bruce

Deeper Study — P5–P7

Bruce's path to kingship

1

Early life and divided loyalties

Born 1274. Of Norman-Scottish nobility. Family held lands in both Scotland and England. Initially swore allegiance to Edward I of England — his path to resistance was not straightforward.

2

Murder of Comyn (February 1306)

Bruce killed John Comyn (his rival for leadership of Scottish resistance) in a church in Dumfries — a dramatic and irreversible act. He was excommunicated by the Pope. This forced him to commit fully to the Scottish cause.

3

Crowned King of Scots (March 1306)

Hurriedly crowned at Scone using a makeshift crown. His forces were immediately defeated at Methven. He became a fugitive — the spider legend (watching a spider try again and again to spin its web) dates from this period.

4

Guerrilla campaign (1307-1314)

Bruce gradually built support. Used hit-and-run tactics rather than pitched battles. 'Herschip of Buchan' — systematic destruction of the Comyn heartland to prevent future opposition.

5

Bannockburn and its aftermath

After Bannockburn (1314), Bruce was master of Scotland. Continued raiding northern England. Edward II refused to recognise Scottish independence. Peace came only in 1328 (Treaty of Edinburgh-Northampton).



6

Death and legacy

Bruce died in 1329, aged 54, possibly of leprosy. His body was buried at Dunfermline Abbey; his heart was taken on crusade (as he had promised) and is buried at Melrose Abbey.

