

## BRUCE, BALLIOL AND THE LORDSHIP OF GALLOWAY: SOUTH-WEST SCOTLAND AND THE WARS OF INDEPENDENCE

by

Richard D. Oram MA PhD FSA Scot  
Rosevalley, Mid Street, Hopeman, Moray IV30 2TF

The role of south-western Scotland in the Scottish Wars of Independence is one of the forgotten chapters in the history of the region. As an area where the interests of several of the key players in the wars — John Balliol, John Comyn earl of Buchan and John Comyn lord of Badenoch, and Robert Bruce lord of Annandale and his son and grandson of the same name — all collided, Galloway was destined to be one of the major battlegrounds of the wars which followed the deposition of Balliol. The internal divisions within the region which became apparent in the course of the sixty years after that event mirrored in microcosm the political cleavages within Scotland as a whole and the ebb and flow of the fortunes of both sides is chronicled closely by events in Galloway. Overshadowed by the better documented and more closely-studied Bruce campaigns in the north-east, the savage civil war which convulsed the lordship between 1306 and 1314, and again from 1332 to 1356, is a neglected area of potentially great value, as it stemmed from a failure of Bruce policies. When faced with the evidence for the success of Robert I in achieving lasting and stable political settlements in most parts of his kingdom, the failure to establish a sound political structure in what had been the heartland of Balliol's Scottish lands is a phenomenon which cannot be conveniently overlooked. The reasons for the failure were in large part deep-rooted in the politics of the succession to the throne of Scotland after 1286, but the ultimate failure was purely personal, solely the responsibility of the king.

Alexander III died in 1286 without a surviving male heir, leaving as successor his infant grand-daughter, Margaret, the 'Maid of Norway'. There had been signs of disturbance in the kingdom once the king's death became common knowledge, for, despite the existence of an acknowledged heir in the person of Margaret, she was but a child and one of suspect health. Rather than a prospect of future stability under a young queen, and a continuation of the prosperity which most of the kingdom had enjoyed under the government of Alexander III, there seemed a real threat of a break in the royal succession and a period of upheaval as rival claimants jockeyed for position. It was recognised in Scotland that if Margaret died while still a child there were two principal claimants to the throne: the aged Robert Bruce of Annandale, son of David, earl of Huntingdon's second daughter, Isabella, a man who claimed to have been recognised as long ago as the reign of Alexander II as nearest heir to the crown after the king and his sons; and John Balliol, grandson of Earl David's eldest daughter, Margaret, and her husband, Alan, lord of Galloway. Of these two men, Bruce was the one who chose to act on the death of the king and seek to strengthen his political and strategic position at the expense of his Balliol rivals. Thus, whilst elsewhere in the kingdom there had been a quick recognition of the new queen and a form of regency government by 'the Guardians' established, in the south-west, where the Bruce family was established in the earldom of Carrick and the lordship of Annandale, and the Balliols held most of the lordship of Galloway and part of Cunninghame, order broke down as Bruce and his supporters attacked the lands and castles of his rival.

### The Opening of the Conflict 1286-93

Balliol did not come into personal possession of his family's Galloway property until after his mother, Dervorgilla's death in January 1290, but the lordship, along with her subsidiary lordship of Cunninghame, formed the heartlands of his powerbase in Scotland. Within Galloway his principal political supporters — and kinsmen — the Comyns, held a landed position second only to that of his mother, with estates in Wigtownshire and Nithsdale; they held also the justiciarship of Galloway in the person of John Comyn of Badenoch, and the sheriffship of Wigtown in that of the earl of Buchan. Moreover, in Nithsdale the Randolphs, in whose hands was vested the office of sheriff of Dumfries, with a jurisdiction that stretched westwards to the Cree, maintained a close alliance with the Balliols and Comyns, Sir Thomas Randolph serving eventually as one of the executors of Dervorgilla's will. This relationship was maintained despite the fact that Sir Thomas had married a daughter of the countess of Carrick by her first husband i.e. a step-daughter of Robert of Annandale's son, Robert, who had married the widowed countess in 1271.<sup>1</sup> The Randolphs had also by this date acquired the lordship of Garlies in the Cree valley in central Galloway, a possession which reinforced their alignment with their Balliol and Comyn neighbours. As Geoffrey Barrow has pointed out, however, these lands were ringed or 'awkwardly wedged between Bruce-held Carrick and Annandale'.<sup>2</sup> This rendered their concentration into one convenient geographical area less of an asset than a liability that could easily be neutralised by the Bruces in a swift campaign.

Balliol appears to have waited for events to unfold in the aftermath of King Alexander's death, secure in the knowledge that he was one of the closest heirs of the new queen and that his supporters, particularly the Comyns, dominated the political and ecclesiastical establishment of the kingdom. The Bruces, however, were not so reticent in voicing their claims and did not hesitate to assert their interest in the succession issue. Robert of Annandale and his son, Robert, earl of Carrick, collected their vassals and attacked the lands of Balliol and his allies in Galloway and Nithsdale. The castles of Dumfries (held by Randolph) and Wigtown (held by the earl of Buchan) were captured, with some bloodshed at the latter. Balliol's own family stronghold at Buittle was also seized and there, in the courtyard of the castle, Bruce forced Patrick McCuffock, a Balliol tenant, to issue some form of proclamation concerning the reasons for his action. The written account of this event is badly damaged and difficult to read, let alone interpret, but it would appear that Bruce was asserting his claim to the throne and was attempting to have his opponents driven from the country.<sup>3</sup> More realistically, the Bruces sought to deprive their opponents of support from the south-west by wreaking widespread devastation throughout Galloway. The Exchequer accounts of John Comyn, who in 1289 succeeded his father, Alexander, to the earldom of Buchan and the sheriffship of Wigtown, speak of land in the sheriffdom lying uncultivated as late as 1290 'on account of the war waged after the king's death by the earl of Carrick'.<sup>4</sup>

1. For the Randolph relationship see: G.W.S. Barron, *Robert Bruce* (Edinburgh, 1988), 383.

2. G.W.S. Barrow, *Kingship and Unity* (London, 1981), 158.

3. *Documents and Records Illustrating the Realm of Scotland*, ed. F. Palgrave, i (London, 1837), i, 42-3; G.W.S. Barrow, *Robert Bruce and the Community of the Realm of Scotland* (London, 1965), 25-6.

4. *The Exchequer Rolls of Scotland*, edd. J. Stuart and others (Edinburgh, 1878-1908), i, 39.

In view of the peaceful transition to regency rule elsewhere in Scotland, the Bruce attack on Galloway appears as an isolated outbreak of violence in an otherwise ordered transition of power. The motives behind it are unmistakable, but its very isolation suggests that it may have been a serious miscalculation on the part of the Bruces. Certainly it was designed to deprive Balliol of a base for similar operations against Carrick or Annandale should the kingdom have degenerated into a general civil war. Bruce had, indeed, been strengthening his position throughout 1286, his activity quickening in the months after the king's death. An assembly of powerful lords from Ireland and western Scotland at his son's castle of Turnberry in Carrick led to the formation of the pact known as the 'Turnberry Band' in the September of that year, six months after the king had plunged to his death on the shores of the Forth. Ostensibly formed to lend support to the earl of Ulster, some historians have viewed the band in a sinister light and interpreted it as signalling the assembly of a pro-Bruce faction aimed at seizing the throne by military means.<sup>5</sup> The presence of Richard de Burgh, earl of Ulster, and Thomas de Clare, however, point in a different direction. Whilst it must be admitted that the support of these men from Ulster would have considerably strengthened the Bruce position and exposed Galloway to further attack, it is more likely that they were looking for Bruce support for their ambitions in north-western Ireland. Both men had plans for campaigns into Connaught, a military venture for which Bruce assistance from Carrick (perhaps in return for a restoration of the estates held in the late twelfth and early thirteenth century in Ulster by Duncan of Carrick) and naval assistance from another member of the band, MacDonald of Islay, would have been invaluable.<sup>6</sup> Of course, it is probable that the Scots who were present at Turnberry formed the core of the Bruce 'party' in national politics (their principal member, the Steward, leading a family that was to be consistent in its support for Robert throughout the period of the succession dispute) there is nothing in the band to suggest that a coup was being contemplated or that anything other than an affirmation of Robert Bruce's interest in the crown was being made. Formation of such an alliance cannot be interpreted as a forewarning of the factional alignments to come, for these had already largely crystallised before 1286. Certainly there were pre-existing tensions within the political community of Scotland which could have led to civil war, but in general the community held together. The Bruce raid into Galloway, therefore, met with a speedy response from the Guardians, whose number included the two Comyns whose south-western lands had been attacked. By the spring of 1287 order had been restored. Old Robert and his son may have succeeded in neutralising Galloway as a power source in any impending conflict, but at the expense of compromising any future claims to the throne.

The uneasy peace between Bruce and Balliol, however, did hold. When the Maid of Norway died in October 1290 in Orkney *en route* from Scandinavia to her new kingdom, the tranquility of the realm was again thrown into doubt. The succession issue was now wide open and all the candidates swiftly moved to stake their claims. By November Balliol was styling himself 'heir of the kingdom of Scotland',<sup>7</sup> but many more than just Robert

5. *Documents Illustrative of the History of Scotland 1286-1306*, ed. J. Stevenson (Edinburgh, 1870), i, No 12; W. Croft Dickinson, *Scotland From the Earliest Times to 1603* (Oxford, 1977), 141; R. Nicholson, *Scotland: The Later Middle Ages* (Edinburgh, 1974), 29.

6. F.M. Powicke, *The Thirteenth Century* (Oxford, 1962), 598 and note; G.W.S. Barrow and A. Royan, 'James, Fifth Stewart of Scotland, 1260(?) - 1309', in K.J. Stringer (ed.), *The Nobility of Medieval Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1985), 172-3.

7. Stevenson, *Documents*, i, No 125.

Bruce considered themselves rivals for that dignity. William Fraser, bishop of St. Andrews, a Comyn supporter, wrote urgently from Leuchars to Edward I of England, telling him of the imminent danger of civil war and fearful of what action Robert Bruce might take considering his resort to violence in 1286.<sup>8</sup> The dispute, however, was settled without bloodshed, when after eighteen months of legal proceedings Edward, as appointed arbiter, judged Balliol to have the strongest case. Thus, in November 1292, two years after he had begun to use the title 'heir of the kingdom of Scotland', John Balliol was proclaimed king of Scots.

Dervorgilla had died in January 1290, leaving John as sole heir to her vast array of estates in Scotland and England. The spring of that year was occupied with the legal business of entry into this inheritance, with which there were some difficulties concerning family debts due to the English crown.<sup>9</sup> His succession to the throne in 1292 saw the union of the Balliol lands with the crown estates of the Scottish kings in the person of one man (although the two portions were still treated as distinct entities), so that John possessed a landed interest in England comparable to the former Huntingdon properties of the Scottish crown. Almost immediately, however, this inheritance brought about a demonstration of Edward's intention to exercise the powers of overlordship which he believed to be his by virtue of Balliol's personal submission to him and performance of homage and fealty. A massive relief of over three thousand pounds was assessed as entry fine on Dervorgilla's Scottish lands, demonstrating Edward's intention to remind Balliol of his feudal obligations, but representing an unprecedented development in Anglo-Scottish relations. On no previous occasion had an English king imposed relief on a Scottish nobleman for entry into purely Scottish property, even during such periods of English domination as between 1174 and 1189 or in 1210. It was clear that Edward was treating John as little more than one of his feudal magnates, a vassal who was expected to fulfil his obligations to his feudal overlord. Acceptance of liability to this fine signalled Balliol's acceptance of the English claims. That Edward received a satisfactory response is no doubt indicated by his complacent pardoning of the bulk of the debt,<sup>10</sup> but his new-found powers were to be exercised in future with greater stringency.

The one distinction which Edward preserved on this occasion was between Balliol's personal inheritance and the traditional crown lands. These had been unified in the person of John, but it would have been recognised that his personal inheritance was his to dispose of as he wished, whilst the crown lands were in theory inalienable and pertained to the office rather than to the person of the king. The relief was on the personal estates only. This distinction was maintained by King Edward after his deposition of Balliol, when the latter's estates were appropriated with doubtful legality by the English king. A result of this distinction between crown land and Balliol demesne was the preservation of the fiction of a discrete lordship of Galloway. And John's accession as king did not end his own direct

8. *Edward I and the Throne of Scotland; An Edition of the Record Sources for the Great Cause*, edd. E.L.G. Stones and G.G. Simpson, ii (Oxford, 1978), 3-4.

9. *Calendar of Documents Relating to Scotland*, ed. J. Bain (Edinburgh, 1881-8), ii, No 412. Edward I's instruction that Balliol be given entry to his mother's estates is cancelled and endorsed with a note that he was enrolled on the Fine Roll for his outstanding relief.

10. *CDS*, ii, No 670.

involvement in the lordship, for on occasions he still chose to reside on his maternal estates there, spending the Christmases of 1293 and 1294, for example, in his mother's old castle at Buittle.<sup>11</sup>

It was whilst resident at Buittle in the winter of 1293 that John became involved in his final dispute with old Robert Bruce of Annandale. This concerned the election of a successor to Henry, bishop of Whithorn, who died in November of that year. Bruce managed to engineer the election by the chapter of Whithorn of his chaplain, Thomas de Dalton or Kirkcudbright, and had urged swift consecration of his candidate to forestall any opposition. This was not strictly necessary, as the king had already issued the canons of Whithorn with a licence to elect a man of their choosing.<sup>12</sup> King John, however, had no doubt intended that his licence be used to secure the election of one of his clerks rather than a member of the household of his inveterate opponent. As both king and lord of Galloway there was precedent for his involvement in elections to the see, and it would seem that he regarded his rights to have been usurped by Bruce. From Buittle he wrote to Archbishop Romeyn of York, metropolitan of Whithorn, claiming that Thomas's election was tainted with simony and asking that the consecration be delayed until two of his own chaplains could come to York to state his case more fully.<sup>13</sup> The lord of Annandale also wrote to the archbishop and succeeded in having his chaplain's election upheld, although his consecration was delayed for nine months on account of the dispute.<sup>14</sup>

This contest, although settled by recourse to the ecclesiastical courts of the metropolitan of the see rather than a resort to arms, was symbolic of the intense rivalry which had developed in the region between partisans of Balliol and Bruce. Considering the recent invasion of Galloway by Bruce men from Carrick and Annandale and the widespread destruction caused by them, the successful election of a Bruce candidate to the vacant see indicated that Robert of Annandale enjoyed a more significant degree of influence over some elements in the region than the landholding pattern would imply. Certainly, the family was to continue to work towards increasing its influence within the boundaries of the lordship, Alexander Bruce, younger grandson of old Robert, being presented as rector in c.1298, whilst probably still in his late teens to the parish of Kirkinner, one of the richest benefices in Galloway,<sup>15</sup> and located in the heart of what was regarded as Comyn territory around Wigtown. Alexander's appointment, however, stemmed probably from the favour shown to the Bruces by Edward I after his victory over the Scots in 1296.

### The Fall of Balliol

As king, John Balliol ruled with little more success than was displayed in his unsuccessful attempt to intervene in the election dispute of 1293/4. He was not the bumbling mediocrity as he is sometimes portrayed, for his government saw the achievement of much good administrative work, but this tends to be overshadowed by his inglorious failure in

11. CDS, ii, No 708, records the twelve-day trip of Walter de Cammo to Balliol in Galloway shortly after Christmas, to present him with the writ of King Edward appointing Cammo Keeper of Fife.

12. *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae Medii Aevi ad Annum 1638*, ed. D.E.R. Watt (Scottish Record Society, 1968), 129-30; D.E.R. Watt, *A Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Graduates to 1410* (Oxford, 1979), 308-10.

13. *Archbishop John le Romeyne's Register*, ed. J. Raine, ii (Surtees Society, 1913), No 1388.

14. *Reg. Romeyne*, ii, 116.

15. Watt, *Dictionary*, 66-7.

most other aspects of kingship. In July 1295 parliament at Stirling took control of government from his hands, twelve councillors being appointed to administer the realm and to open negotiations with the French for an alliance. The identity of these councillors has not been fully established, but it would seem likely that they were led by the Comyns and their political allies. Their first action was to dispatch a deputation to France to settle the treaty. This was to be sealed by the marriage of Balliol's elder son, Edward, to Jeanne de Valois, niece of Philip IV, though the match was eventually never made.<sup>16</sup> Such moves can be seen as deliberately provocative of Edward I, whose over-ambitious interpretation of the dues owed to him by John and the rights which he felt to be his as personal feudal superior of the Scottish king had helped to precipitate relations between the kingdoms into the crisis in which they now found themselves. To the Scots at the time, however, they were simply open demonstrations of their own freedom from English constraints; but the nature of these actions presented a challenge to Edward to prove his superiority, and raised also the prospect of an alliance between his French enemies and his opponents in the north. To Edward, the military threat was intolerable.

War broke out in March 1296 and the Scottish host was summoned. Robert Bruce, son of the competitor of 1286, who in 1295 had resigned Carrick into the hands of his eldest son, the future Robert I, and had succeeded to Annandale, was summoned to give his service as a tenant in chief, but refused the call to arms. As a result, Annandale was taken into royal hands and placed under the administration of John, earl of Buchan, to be used as a base for attacks against the English western march.<sup>17</sup> Part of King Edward's response to the outbreak of hostilities shows his familiarity with the political history of Galloway and the descent of the lordship from the time of Alan, last of the legitimate, direct male line of native lords. On 6th March he had Thomas of Galloway, illegitimate son of Alan, who had tried and failed in 1235 to seize control of the lordship through rebellion against Alexander II, released from custody in Balliol's family stronghold of Barnard Castle and, in an astute but perhaps over-optimistic move, armed with a charter of liberties (contents unknown) and sent towards the lordship with the aim of undermining support for Balliol and Buchan by reviving old loyalties. Thomas had, by this date, been in custody for over sixty years, although in 1286 there appears to have been some move to release him, which was under discussion in council at Edinburgh on the day of Alexander III's death.<sup>18</sup> Edward had the aged man conveyed to Carlisle, where he was once again placed in custody in time to witness the outbreak of hostilities. His fate thereafter is unknown, but instructions had been issued from Berwick to restore to him the lands which his father, Alan, had given to him in the 1220s or early 1230s.<sup>19</sup>

Late in March, Buchan and Badenoch, prominent members of the party hostile to England, with the earls of Menteith, Strathearn, Lennox, Ross, Atholl and Mar, crossed the Solway fords from Annandale and embarked on a devastating raid through Cumberland, culminating in an assault on Carlisle. The attack was unsuccessful and the Scots were driven

16. *Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland*, edd. T. Thompson and C. Innes (Edinburgh, 1814-75), i, 451-3.

17. *The Chronicle of Walter of Guisborough*, ed. H. Rothwell (Camden Society, 1957), 270.

18. *Chronicon de Lanercost* (Maitland Club, 1839), 116.

19. CDS, ii, Nos 728, 729; CDS, v, No 162; *Rotuli Scotiae in Turri Londiniensi et in Domo Capitulari Westmonasteriensi Asservati*, edd. D. MacPherson and others (1814-19), i, 22.

back with heavy losses, including 'one of the more noble men of Galloway',<sup>20</sup> which suggests that both Comyns were drawing support from their estates there. Withdrawing to Scotland, most of the army marched to join the rest of the Scottish host in time to share in its humiliating defeat by the earl of Surrey at Dunbar on 27th April. This marked the effective end of Scottish resistance, but Balliol held out until the summer when he surrendered to Edward, abdicating at Brechin on 10th July and being consigned to imprisonment in the Tower. In English eyes Balliol's reign ended with this act, but for most Scots he was still king, at least until the seizure of the throne in 1306 by Robert, earl of Carrick. Edward now took on the direct personal lordship of Scotland and with it the lordship of Galloway, which he liberally interpreted as included among the rights which Balliol had resigned.

### Galloway under Edward I

From July 1296 Edward ruled as lord of Galloway, ignoring the rights of Balliol's son, Edward, a hostage in safe custody in England.<sup>21</sup> Hostages were also taken from the principal families of the lordship and neighbouring districts, and steps were taken to establish English officials in control of key points throughout the territory. In September 1296 Henry Percy was given custody of the royal fortresses of Ayr and Wigtown, Balliol's seat at Buittle and the earl of Buchan's castle at Cruggleton.<sup>22</sup> Described variously as 'our warden of the whole of our land of Galloway and our sherriffdom of Ayr' (i.e. essentially the English lieutenant governing the whole of the south-west), Percy was given full authority within the region, including control over the patronage and advowson of churches,<sup>23</sup> probably by token of his kinship with both Edward I and Balliol, who was his wife's brother-in-law.

Despite the obvious tenuousness of his hold over Galloway, made even more precarious by the rebellion of the Scots in summer 1297 (including on this occasion Robert Bruce of Carrick), it is clear that Edward intended to exploit fully those rights which he felt to be his as successor to Balliol as lord of Galloway. For him the lordship was a valuable source of patronage which would augment the reserves available to him in England. Thus clerks of the royal household are recorded as being presented to the churches of Buittle, Wigtown and Kirkcubright,<sup>24</sup> the first being the church serving the caput of Balliol's former estates. Estates were also carved out of this vast windfall for Edward's loyal servants, notably John de St. John, who received Buittle, Glasserton and Preston,<sup>25</sup> which established him as the king's principal tenant in Galloway. As the heartland of Balliol power and the principal centre of Comyn influence south of the Forth, it is unlikely that any of the grants made by Edward initially proved of benefit to their recipients. Certainly, English control over the lordship was achieved by military occupation, there was no simple phasing in of a new administration to replace Balliol's system.

20. *Chron. Guisborough*, 272-4; *William Rishanger, Chronica et Annales*, ed. H.T.Riley (Rolls Series, 1865), 156.

21. *CDS*, ii, No 964.

22. *Stevenson, Documents*, ii, No 389.

23. *Stevenson, Documents*, ii, No 400; *Rot. Scot.*, i, 35.

24. *CDS*, ii, Nos 998, 1023; *Stevenson, Documents*, ii, No 423.

25. *CDS*, ii, Nos 1338, 1630.

Although the Scottish rising of 1297 was quickly suppressed in the south-west, with Percy moving speedily through the region under his wardenship to receive the submission of the principal parties involved, most notably the lord of Douglas and the Steward, the English position did not greatly improve.<sup>26</sup> The young earl of Carrick and John Comyn of Buchan remained in rebellion, which counterbalanced the drift of some of the more prominent members of the south-western nobility to the English camp.<sup>27</sup> In 1300 Galloway became the target of a major campaign designed at securing Edward's control over the whole region and at breaking the influence of the Bruces and Comyns. Control of Caerlaverock on the eastern side of the Nith estuary was one of the first objectives, as possession of it would give the English a bridgehead for operations into Galloway proper, as well as into Annandale and Nithsdale, which could be supplied by sea from the major victualling point at Skinburness across the Solway in Cumberland.

With Caerlaverock taken by mid July, the English host crossed the Nith into Galloway, passing by way of Lochrutton and Bridge of Dee to Kirkcudbright.<sup>28</sup> The Chronicle of Thomas Rishanger mentions that the Scots attempted peace negotiations twice on the course of the campaign. The first attempt was led by Bishop Thomas, the second by Badenoch and Buchan, who sought a restoration of Balliol and the return of all forfeited land as the price for their submission.<sup>29</sup> Both attempts failed. Delayed by problems of supply, Edward pushed on to Twynholm and then to Girthon, but after a series of indecisive skirmishes on the Cree he was forced to withdraw eastwards when faced with dissent among his barons and the desertion of his Welsh levies. On reaching the Nith the king was met by Archbishop Winchelsea of Canterbury, who presented him with a papal letter demanding that aggression against the Scots cease, the pro-Balliol diplomatic initiative at Rome then being at its height.<sup>30</sup>

The 1300 campaign had ended with few tangible successes, but Edward clung to what headway he had made in Galloway. John de St. John, son of the man to whom the main Balliol estates had been granted in 1296, had recently succeeded his father and was determined to gain admission to his 'inheritance' in Galloway. The king appointed him warden in succession to Henry Percy, and armed him with wide discretionary powers to raise troops, conduct raids and admit to the king's peace those men of Galloway who wished to submit, though this last power was not confirmed until 1301.<sup>31</sup> Although there are no indications of a major upsurge of support for Edward in the wake of his expedition, it would be unwise to dismiss the campaign of 1300 as a total failure. Conversely, there was no sign of a general turning to the rebel side.

The following year a small force under the command of the Prince of Wales campaigned in the lordship, presumably to follow up what success had been achieved in the previous

26. Barrow, *Robert Bruce*, 119-20.

27. The question of the alignment of the MacDowalls, McCullochs and MacCans is a matter of debate. The dating of the documents showing them in English service by 1297 (*CDS*, ii, No 1049) is doubtful, probably belonging to as late as 1303, but see also *CDS*, ii, No 894 and letter on p.253.

28. *Liber Quotidianus Contrarotulitoris Garederobae Anno Regni Regis Edwardi Primi Vicesimo Octavo*, ed. J. Topham (Society of Antiquaries, 1787), lxviii.

29. *Chron. Rishanger*, 440-6; For the actions of Bishop Thomas, see Watt, *Dictionary*, 208-10.

30. Barrow, *Robert Bruce*, 168.

31. *CDS*, ii, Nos 1170, 1244.



summer and to counteract any threat from rebel forces in the area. His campaign saw no serious fighting and a letter from William de Durham to the king tells of the retreat of a rebel army through the Rhinns of Kells in northern Galloway into Glencairn and Nithsdale.<sup>32</sup> With no opposition, Prince Edward crossed the Cree, which had been reached by the vanguard of his father's army the previous summer, and took the opportunity to make a pilgrimage to Whithorn, where, according to Durham, he found the image of St. Ninian (which the Scots had smuggled away to Sweetheart on word of the prince's approach) miraculously restored to its place in the shrine. The rebellion was by that time beginning to collapse and Bruce, dismayed at the prospect of a restoration of King John, which the Comyn-backed diplomatic offensive was aiming for (so putting an end to his aspirations towards the throne), submitted to St. John and so put an effective end to the rising in Carrick.<sup>33</sup> Opposition from the followers of Buchan in Wigtownshire may have continued until early in 1304, for arrangements were made at that time for the disposition of forces to protect the country east of the Cree;<sup>34</sup> but by May 1304 Buchan had also surrendered,<sup>35</sup> all hopes for French assistance in restoring Balliol having been shattered by the defeat of Philip IV by the Flemings at Courtrai in July 1302 and his subsequent peace settlement with the English.

To the latter part of this rising may be assigned a group of letters to native Galwegian noblemen in Edward's service, rather than to 1297 as they are dated in Bain's Calendar.<sup>36</sup> It would appear that by April 1303 several of the most prominent local chieftains, most notably the heads of the MacDowall, McCulloch and MacCan kindreds, were active in Edward's service, presumably having taken the offer to come into the king's peace afforded by John de St. John. These men were commanded by the king to raise two thousand men for service against the remaining rebels and to join a force provided by the earl of Carrick and other south-western gentlemen, such as Sir Richard Siward of Tibbers in Nithsdale. Particularly for MacDowall and McCulloch, this submission was final, and both men were to greatly profit from their support for the English. When Bruce rebelled once again in 1306 they both remained loyal to Edward and were to suffer especially when Robert directed his energies against Galloway.

The collapse of Scottish resistance in 1304 was followed by a period of intense governmental activity during which arrangements for the good governance of the country were drawn up. These were made official in September 1305 as the Ordinance for the Government of Scotland. Under its terms, Galloway, in common with the reorganised justiciarships in Lothian and north of the Forth, was to receive two justiciars, one English and one Scots,<sup>37</sup> the latter being the Nithsdale knight Sir Roger de Kirkpatrick. He was a man of no great standing or any distinction other than his adherence to the English since 1297. Richard Siward, who likewise had a long history of loyalty to Edward following appointment as warden of the castles of Dumfries, Kirkcudbright and Wigtown during the hearing of the succession dispute in the early 1290s,<sup>38</sup> was made sheriff of Dumfries

32. CDS, ii, No 1225.

33. Barrow, *Robert Bruce*, 172.

34. CDS, ii, No 1635.

35. CDS, ii, Nos 1535, 1538, 1541, 1594.

36. CDS, ii, No 1049; Stevenson, *Documents*, ii, No 438.

37. CDS, ii, No 1691.

38. Stevenson, *Documents*, i, Nos 219, 229, 262.

and restored to the wardenship of its castle. The sheriffship of Wigtown was given to Thomas McCulloch, whose family was to remain with the English cause until the 1360s.<sup>39</sup> Thus the administrative posts of the south-west were placed in the hands of reliable men, while supporters of Balliol, Bruce and Comyn were specifically excluded from office. Comment has often been passed on the liberality of the English king in permitting Scots to become sheriffs, or allowing them to share in the offices of justiciar, but it is apparent from the personnel so honoured that all had been his supporters since soon after 1296 and were generally untainted by any whiff of rebellion. The settlement, however, was a dead letter within just months of its issue as a result of the murder on 10th February 1306 at Dumfries of John Comyn of Badenoch by Robert Bruce and the latter's subsequent seizure of the Scottish crown.

### The Harrying of Galloway

The seven years which followed Comyn's murder saw the transformation of the lordship into one of the key battle-grounds of the Wars of Independence, with the fusion of the Comyn and English interests in the region against those of the Bruce family. Carrick, although a more secure base for King Robert than the strategically exposed Annandale, was still a dangerously isolated position, ringed by hostile territory. Galloway, on its south-eastern flank, was to form one of the principal centres of the opposition to Bruce, an enmity no doubt based on memories of the actions of Robert's father and grandfather twenty years before. In most accounts of the pre-Bannockburn phase of Robert's career the Galloway campaigns are mentioned briefly in passing, except for a short notice of his victory in Glentworth over a small English raiding party, or details of the more anecdotal type. The 'herschip of Buchan', the bloody campaign and systematic devastation carried out in the centre of Comyn power in the north-east, is generally given much greater coverage, although the ravaging of the south-west appears to have been as savage and to have brought about a profound change in the demographic structure of the lordship.

Bruce's first moves, as suggested by the Chronicle of Lanercost and an anonymous letter written towards the end of March 1306,<sup>40</sup> were to secure control of the important castles of the region. Dumfries, Tibbers and Dalswinton in Nithsdale (i.e. the seat of the sheriff, Siward's own castle and Comyn's stronghold) and Ayr on the northern edge of Carrick were surprised and taken, and the castle of Dunaverty at the south end of Kintyre and Bruce's own family stronghold at Loch Doon, remote in the Galloway uplands, were strengthened and provisioned. It is possible that he moved into the lordship immediately after the murder in a vain attempt to bring the men of Galloway out in rebellion, or to capture the English garrisons based on Buittle and Wigtown, but this may be a confusion with the brief campaign conducted in that area soon after his coronation on 25th March.<sup>41</sup> In June 1306 Robert's army was crushed at Methven Wood near Perth by a force under Aymer de Valence, earl of Pembroke, and the recently-crowned king was reduced to the state of a hunted fugitive. In the immediate aftermath of the battle the position of the Bruce party in the south-west deteriorated with great rapidity. Tibbers, the last outpost of his

39. *CDS*, ii, No 1691.

40. *Chron. Lanercost*, 203-4; E.L.G.Stones (ed.), *Anglo-Scottish Relations 1174-1328* (Oxford, 1970), 261-3, 267.

41. Barrow, *Robert Bruce*, 214.

cause in Nithsdale, fell by early August, and its constable, John Seton, who had been present at Comyn's murder in February, was hanged and drawn at Newcastle along with a number of other Scottish prisoners.<sup>42</sup> This was followed closely by the fall of Loch Doon Castle and the execution of its commander, Christopher Seton, which marked the elimination of the last Bruce stronghold in the south-west.<sup>43</sup>

In early February 1307, Bruce started the long road back from these defeats, landing in Carrick with a small force. His brothers, Thomas and Alexander (the latter a cleric), along with Sir Reginald Crawford and 'a certain Irish kinglet and the lord of Kintyre', embarked on a separate punitive expedition into Galloway.<sup>44</sup> Their campaign speedily ended in disaster on 9th February at Loch Ryan, with Dougal MacDowall, head of that family, surprising and defeating them in battle. The Irish chieftain and the lord of Kintyre, the latter perhaps the chief of the McQuillans who had held Dunaverty for Robert, were killed in the skirmish and their heads sent to Edward I at Lanercost. The Bruce brothers were captured along with Crawford, taken to the Prince of Wales at Wetheral, and then carried to Carlisle for summary execution. MacDowall, for his part in this success, was knighted by Edward and rewarded with various lands and gifts.<sup>45</sup> For his actions, however, he earned for himself the bitter enmity of the surviving Bruces.

Robert himself moved into the Galloway uplands between Carrick and Wigtownshire, and over the next few months was to wage a highly successful guerrilla war, defeating a force sent to hunt him down in Glentrool and following this up even more spectacularly by the satisfaction of defeating the victor of Methven Wood in May 1307 at Loudon Hill in eastern Ayrshire.<sup>46</sup> From his fastness in the Galloway hills, Bruce conducted a savage war of attrition against his enemies in the lordship and gradually gained the upper hand. Following the death of Edward I at Burgh-by-Sands in July the initiative in the war passed decisively to Robert, who responded by increasing the intensity of his attacks on the lowlands of Galloway. By September 1307 refugees from the lordship, fleeing from Bruce's depredations, were granted protection by Edward II and given permission to graze their stock in Inglewood Forest in Cumbria, which indicates the scale of the dislocation of normal life which his attacks were causing.<sup>47</sup> In a move aimed at curbing his raids before the situation became irrecoverable, John of Brittany, the English Lieutenant in Scotland, was ordered to take an army into Galloway in response to an appeal by MacDowall and St. John, who were unable to prevent his marauding by themselves.<sup>48</sup> The Chronicle of Lanercost records that Robert and his brother Edward moved freely throughout Scotland, 'in despite of the English guardians and chiefly in Galloway, from which district he took tribute under the agreement that it should be left in peace'.<sup>49</sup>

In spite of increasing hardships inflicted on the people of Galloway, the region was still in 1308 one of the major centres of anti-Bruce sentiment. In June of that year Robert sent his younger brother into the lordship with the aim of finally breaking that resistance.

42. CDS, ii, No 1811.

43. CDS, ii, No 1841.

44. *Chron. Lanercost*, 205.

45. Palgrave, *Docs. Hist. Scot.*, i, 318-9; CDS, ii, Nos 1905, 1915; *Chron. Lanercost*, 181-2.

46. John Barbour, *The Bruce*, ed. W.M. Menzie (London, 1909), Bk.vii.

47. CDS, iii, No 14.

48. CDS, iii, No 15.

49. *Chron. Lanercost*, 210.

The campaign was not the total success for which the Bruces hoped, but MacDowall was forced to flee to England for safety and a battle at the crossings of the Dee provided victory over Donald MacCan, native leader in eastern Galloway. This gave Edward Bruce almost undisputed control of the country-side.<sup>50</sup> Although MacCan had been captured at the Fords of Dee and MacDowall had been driven to flee, final victory eluded Bruce whilst the English maintained their grip on the local fortresses, particularly Buittle, from which a fiction of government could be maintained; otherwise the lordship was effectively under Bruce control. Robert was obviously determined to break the back of Galwegian particularism, which Edward I had manipulated with such great success, and he set out to bind the province firmly to the Scottish crown. Thus by the beginning of 1309 Edward Bruce is found styled lord of Galloway in official documents,<sup>51</sup> though it was to take several more years of savage campaigning before he could claim to be *de facto* ruler as well as *de jure*. The castles still in English hands, however, prevented a swift conclusion to the war: Loch Doon in the Bruce earldom of Carrick was still held against King Robert as late as the autumn of 1311. Buittle Castle, the key to eastern Galloway, was attacked by Edward Bruce in 1312, but did not fall until February 1313, when the king himself led a campaign into the south-west, capturing and razing the castles of Dumfries, Dalswinton and Buittle,<sup>52</sup> and probably also Caerlaverock. With the main fortresses destroyed, Bruce was at last effective master of Galloway, a situation which was demonstrated by his ability to use the Solway ports as bases for an assault on the Isle of Man in May 1313, when he captured Rushen Castle, which had been held against him by Dougal MacDowall.<sup>53</sup>

### The Bruce Lordship

Edward Bruce's tenure of the lordship was to be of short duration, the title reverting to the crown along with that of earl of Carrick (granted to him by his brother in 1313) following his death without legitimate heirs in battle at Dundalk in Ireland in October 1318. During his ten year tenure, Edward was only for a short time in a position to exploit his possessions, the years up to 1313 being spent largely in devastating the lordship, and from 1316 until his death he was totally committed to the war in Ireland. Despite this, Edward Bruce clearly intended to rule the lordship and appears to have been active there for a short period immediately after Bannockburn. The strongest evidence for his activity is as benefactor of the Church, particularly the influential priory at Whithorn, perhaps with the aim of buying its support through generous grants of lands and privileges in the Machars.<sup>54</sup> The Bruces did not enjoy the general support of the Church in Galloway: Bishop Thomas, although owing his position to Bruce influence, being an outspoken critic of the new regime, found it safer to remain in England for most of the time.<sup>55</sup> As late as 1319 Thomas was regarded as a committed and loyal supporter of the English interest,<sup>56</sup> but by the time of his death in 1326 the English had come to doubt his loyalty. His successor,

50. *Joannis de Fordun, Chronica Gentis Scotorum*, ed. W.F. Skene (Edinburgh, 1970-1), i, 345; Barbour, *The Bruce*, Bk. ix; CDS, iii, No 83; Walter Bower, *Scottichronicon*, ed. D.E.R. Watt and others, vi (Aberdeen, 1991), 343, 345 444 note 54.

51. *APS*, i, 459.

52. *Chron. Fordun*, i, 346.

53. *The Chronicle of Man and the Sudreys*, edd. P.A. Munch and the Rev. Dr. Goss (Manx Society, 1874), i, 111.

54. *Registrum Magni Sigili Regum Scotorum*, edd. J.M. Thompson and others (Edinburgh, 1882-1914), i, app. i, No 20.

55. Watt, *Dictionary*, 308-10.

56. *Foedera, Conventiones, Litterae et Cuiuscunque Generis Acta Publica*, ed. T. Rymer (London, 1816-69), ii, 401.

Simon of Wedale, abbot of Holyrood, represented a return to the tried and tested system of electing men of non-Galloway background to the episcopate, he having been abbot of a monastery closely associated with the crown and which possessed substantial landed interests in the south-west. Bruce patronage in the lordship, however, was to extend into more areas than Church politics and diocesan affairs, since the forfeitures of the families descended from Alan of Galloway — the Balliols, Comyns, Ferrars and Zouches — had placed at the king's disposal a vast amount of lands, privileges and titles with which to reward his supporters and establish men loyal to himself in positions of power.

The lordship represented an enormous windfall of property which Robert I was not slow to exploit. Few original charters survive to give anything like a comprehensive overview of the redistribution of estates in Galloway made after 1314, but sufficient remains to show the general extent of the new infeftments made by 1329. Edward Bruce, as lord of Galloway, took possession of the former Balliol lands and perhaps a portion of the Comyns' estates. Following his death, his mistress, Isabel of Atholl, and their bastard son, Alexander Bruce, were granted Colvend, Senwick and Kelton in the Stewartry and Mochrum in Wigtownshire (but not the Balliol caput at Buittle which remained in royal hands until its grant to Sir James Douglas in 1325),<sup>57</sup> all of which reverted to the crown on Alexander's death in 1333 at the Scottish defeat in the battle of Halidon Hill. The Bruce family, however, were not the sole beneficiaries from the redistribution of the Galloway estates, for several families prominent in the Bruce cause before 1314 were allocated territory. Foremost amongst this group were the Soulis lords of Liddesdale, who descended from the line of the elder brother of Bruce's old political associate, John Soulis the Guardian. His nephew, Nicholas de Soulis, had married Margaret Comyn, one of the heiresses of John Comyn earl of Buchan, who had died without issue in 1308, and they were allowed to take over a portion of Buchan's Galloway lands. Their elder son, John de Soulis, received the barony and castle of Cruggleton in Wigtownshire, the caput of the former Comyn estates west of the Cree. On his death in Ireland in 1318 in the service of Edward Bruce, Cruggleton and his other estates passed to his younger brother, William.<sup>58</sup> The Soulis' possessions reverted to the crown two years later when William was forfeited for his involvement in the conspiracy to depose and kill King Robert.

While the Soulis family represented members of the top rank of the baronage, the majority of the beneficiaries were men of middling status, but who as recipients of royal patronage were established as men of influence in the localities. One such knight was Robert Boyd, who had been with the king since 1306. His principal gains were in Ayrshire, but he also received the lordship of the Glenkens in northern Galloway, formerly in the possession of a native nobleman, 'Gylbycht McMalene'.<sup>59</sup> The Fleming family, later to rise to dominance in Wigtownshire for a short time in the following reign, made their first appearance in the region on a modest scale with the grant to Malcolm Fleming of the lands of Polton in the parish of Sorbie.<sup>60</sup> Grants on a similar scale were made to men drawn from Carrick and Nithsdale, e.g. Thomas Edgar from upper Nithsdale received

57. *RMS*, i, app. i, No 37; app. ii, Nos 319, 320, 623.

58. *RMS*, i, Nos 28, 29, 33, 91; app. i, Nos 20, 142, 143, 147.

59. *RMS*, i, app. i, No 306.

60. *RMS*, i, app. ii, No 325.

the lands of Kildonan in the Rhinns and John McNeil of Carrick those of Craigcaffie in the parish of Inch.<sup>61</sup> The implantation of outsiders occurred right across Galloway from the Rhinns to Nithsdale, so that families of proven loyalty were brought into the region and helped to break down further the barriers of provincial particularism.

Robert I was not deliberately vindictive towards his defeated opponents and it would seem that many of his former enemies within the lordship were confirmed in possession of, or restored to, their ancient lands and positions. The MacDowall family, however, had never made their peace with the king for their part in the capture and execution of his brothers and were accordingly forfeited. Sir Dougal MacDowall, somehow at liberty after the fall of Rushen Castle in Man, remained in exile in England, dying there in 1327 or 1328 without having made any settlement with the Scots.<sup>62</sup> His son was not so firm in his opposition and had made his submission to David II before the invasion of the Disinherited in 1332, but soon deserted to the Balliol camp once more. The MacCan's, supporters of Edward I from 1296, probably submitted soon after the capture of their leader, Sir Donald in 1308. Their rehabilitation was completed by 1322 when they were granted Southwick,<sup>63</sup> a barony formerly in possession of the cadet branch of the lords of the neighbouring barony of Colvend, who had found it easier to abandon their Scottish lands and return to their Cumbrian homeland rather than come to terms with the new regime.

The new settlement in Galloway, effectively completed before the death of Robert I in 1329, could have been expected to have converted the lordship into a major centre of support for the Bruce dynasty. On this score, however, it must be regarded as one of that king's great failures, for the true situation was to prove more fragile than outward appearances of solidarity suggested, and the majority of the native lords seem to have paid little more than lip service to their new rulers. The chief flaw in the structure was the absence of a single, powerful lord as intermediary between the king and the lesser chieftains of Galloway, as replacement for the Balliols or Comyns. In his political settlements elsewhere in the kingdom (for example in Moray where he established Thomas Randolph as earl with regalian powers), he had been careful to ensure that the local power structures were headed by men with the prestige, status and resources to establish the authority of the new regime without question. Galloway had no such recognised head after the death of Edward Bruce. In 1325 King Robert gave the lordship of Buittle, the symbolic centre of lordship power in the later thirteenth century, to Sir James Douglas, one of his chief supporters, perhaps intending that he should become the focus of royal power in the area. Significantly, however, there was no grant of the title of 'lord of Galloway' to any individual following the death of Edward Bruce. But the Douglasses were too preoccupied with their interests elsewhere in the kingdom to be able to take on the role of royal strong men, and it was left to others to fill this vacuum with or without the connivance of the king. As a result, the lesser baronage, who had formed the chief vassals of John Balliol as lord of Galloway, were able to assert political control in a manner unthinkable to their counterparts elsewhere in the kingdom. Memories of the devastation wrought by Bruce and his supporters would take many years to heal and it is unlikely

61. *RMS*, i, app. ii, Nos 616, 683.

62. *CDS*, iii, No 944.

63. *RMS*, i, app. ii, No 614.

that the king could have relied on the bulk of the populace to aid him in the future, with the result that the Bruce establishment rested on the doubtful loyalties of a handful of native lords. The anti-Bruce reaction made itself manifest on the appearance for a rival for the crown in the 1330s in the person of Edward Balliol, son of King John, when much of Galloway rose in support of the pretender and brought the whole edifice of the Bruce establishment crashing in ruins.

### **Bruce against Balliol: the final phase 1332-56**

Edward Balliol's invasion of Scotland, lasting from 1332 until his final resignation of his lands and rights to Edward III of England in 1356, formed the stormy coda to the association of his family with the lordship of Galloway, and saw the last rising of the native peoples against the encroaching authority of the kings of Scots.<sup>64</sup> Balliol's involvement with Galloway was characterised by sharp divisions of loyalty within the province and successive changes of side by several of the leading men of the lordship. The Bruce settlement of the region in the 1320s had not destroyed support for the Balliol family or the pro-English sympathies of some of the nobles. This was demonstrated clearly in 1332 when Eustace Maxwell of Caerlaverock, who appears to have exercised considerable support in eastern Galloway and Nithsdale, and Duncan MacDowall in Wigtownshire threw in their weight behind the Balliol cause.

Maxwell was a somewhat controversial character, having been tried in 1320 for his part in the Soulis conspiracy, but acquitted for want of evidence. Despite the suspicions surrounding him, Maxwell had been established in a strong position in lower Nithsdale, and appears to have enjoyed considerable authority east of the Cree. Following Balliol's coronation at Scone in 1332, it was Maxwell who had caused the siege of Perth by Bruce loyalists to be raised by attacking the besiegers' lands in the rear, having raised an army from Galloway.<sup>65</sup> His defection to Balliol at this critical time prompted a savage reaction by the Bruce loyalists and a force led by John Randolph earl of Moray, Sir Andrew Moray and Sir Archibald Douglas raided through Galloway and re-started the pattern of warfare as it had been under King Robert in the pre-Bannockburn days. MacDowall, like Maxwell a man of doubtful loyalty, and chief of a family entrenched in the political framework of the country west of the Cree, likewise raised rebellion in that region against David II. In 1334, however, Balliol succeeded in alienating much of the support he had won in the south-west by granting Dumfriesshire, along with all of south-eastern Scotland, to Edward III as payment for English aid.<sup>66</sup> Foremost amongst the defectors from his cause at this stage was MacDowall, who made his peace with King David's supporters and brought Wigtownshire back into the Bruce camp, so causing a state of civil war to develop in Galloway.<sup>67</sup> Although the Lanercost chronicler attributes MacDowall's change of heart to the influence of his wife, his submission coincided with a major raid conducted by the earl of Moray, the Steward, Sir Laurence Abernethy and Sir William Douglas: discretion was very much the better part of valour.

64. For discussions of Edward Balliol's 'reign', see: Nicholson, *The Later Middle Ages*, Chapter 6; A. Grant, *Independence and Nationhood. Scotland 1306-1469* (London, 1984), 19-24; R.C.Reid, 'Edward Balliol', *Transactions of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society*, 3rd Series, xxxv (1956-7), 38-63.

65. *Chron. Lanercost*, 269.

66. *Rot. Scot.*, i, 273, 391.

67. *Chron. Lanercost*, 277-8.

Maxwell maintained his allegiance to Balliol and the English cause, but at a price. From 1335 he appears as English sheriff of Dumfries, clearly in recognition of his dominant position in Nithsdale and as a reward for his service since 1332.<sup>68</sup> Within Galloway Edward Balliol was making clear moves to curry favour, particularly with the Church which was recognised by both sides as having great influence in the region. He petitioned Edward III for restoration of the lands and privileges in Ireland of Dundrennan Abbey<sup>69</sup> and it was perhaps as a token of gratitude for his successful intervention in their plea that part of the monastic estates, the island of Hestan in the Urr estuary, passed into Balliol's hands, to be developed later as his base for operations. Despite such efforts, however, his position in the lordship continued to deteriorate, and in 1337 Maxwell also deserted to the Bruce party.<sup>70</sup> The moral outrage of the Lanercost chronicler at this cynical breach of faith (Maxwell had waited until Edward III had provided him with money and supplies for the defence of Caerlaverock before deserting to the Scots) was tempered with the satisfaction that Maxwell had immediately been declared forfeit, his lands and castle given to the lord of Gilsland, and a devastating raid conducted by the new owner launched against the traitor and his supporters.

The desertion of Maxwell marked the nadir of Balliol's fortunes in Galloway at this time, for by the summer of 1339 support for him in the lordship was on the resurgence. In August of that year MacDowall, Maxwell and a third local chieftain, Michael M'Ghie, reverted to their original allegiances and threw the south-west into turmoil yet again.<sup>71</sup> The situation continued to improve for Balliol and in 1341 Patrick McCulloch and John Marshall, prominent landholders in Wigtownshire, entered the service of Edward III.<sup>72</sup> It was probably at this time that Balliol began the fortification of his base on Hestan Island, Duncan MacDowall being placed in charge of its defence.<sup>73</sup> In June 1341, however, David II returned from his exile in France and by November had set in motion a number of moves designed to undermine his opponent's position in Galloway, mainly through the establishment of a new group of men within the region on whom he could depend.

David's principal move was to set up the Fleming family in a position of titular supremacy over the lands west of the Cree and replace Duncan MacDowall as natural and social leader of this region with Malcolm Fleming, one of his principal supporters since the dark days of 1332. To this end Fleming, who had previously received only some small estates in the Machars from Robert I, was rewarded for his good faith to the Bruces by his creation as earl of Wigtown in November 1341.<sup>74</sup> This placed in the region a new power of proven loyalty to the crown, which would exercise at least in theory feudal superiority over the lesser landholders and provided the strong local leadership which King Robert had failed to establish. Fleming's earldom was just the most prominent part of a concerted effort to regain the political initiative in Galloway and, following the example set by his father, King David pursued a policy of introducing some of his more loyal

68. CDS, iii, app. i, 317-9.

69. CDS, iii, No 1157.

70. *Chron. Lanercost*, 290-1.

71. *Rot. Scot.*, i, 571.

72. *Rot. Scot.*, i, 612.

73. C.A. Raleigh Radford, 'Balliol's Manor House on Hestan Island', *TDGAS*, 3rd Series, xxxv (1956-7) vi, No 33-7.

74. *Regesta Regum Scottorum*, edd. G.W.S. Barrow, B. Webster and others (Edinburgh, 1960-), vi, No 39.



supporters into the region and at the same time of winning the support of the Church locally.<sup>75</sup> The lands of the Mowbray family, centred on Borgue, which had been in royal hands since their forfeiture in 1332, were partitioned amongst Bruce loyalists, of whom William, lord Douglas, was the chief beneficiary.<sup>76</sup> Another recipient of former Mowbray land was Fergus MacDowall, whose relationship to Duncan is not known, a move which seems to have been designed to split the family and to undermine Duncan's personal standing. Fergus received the barony of Borgue itself<sup>77</sup> and was to give valuable military service to David II against the English, one such occasion being recorded in the Legend of St. Ninian.<sup>78</sup>

Duncan MacDowall at this time was in command of the garrison of Balliol's recently-established headquarters on Hestan Island, but was coming under increasing pressure to submit to King David. A mainland blockade of the island brought submission closer, but a naval expedition from England brought much-needed supplies; fully-provisioned, the island became the principal stronghold of Balliol power in Galloway.<sup>79</sup> Despite the lifting of the immediate pressure on him, there are indications that MacDowall's loyalty continued to waver, particularly since the bulk of his lands in Wigtownshire seemed destined to pass from his personal control. It was probably anxiety to preserve what he could of his family lands that prompted him to defect to the Bruce interest in 1345, his loyalty to his new master being reinforced by the grant of estates in Senwick, Twynholm and Kelton.<sup>80</sup> His defection brought a swift reaction from the English authorities, for in the same year William de Dyfford and Thomas de Lucy attacked and captured Hestan by sea, slighted its defences and carried off MacDowall and his family to captivity in England.<sup>81</sup> A two-year spell in the Tower cured Duncan of his pro-Bruce leanings and, returned to King Edward's peace, he was restored to his position in Galloway. His family, however, remained in England as hostages for his future good behaviour.<sup>82</sup>

Balliol himself appears to have continued the struggle in Galloway, despite the setback of the loss of one of his most influential supporters and the destruction of the peel at Hestan. Throughout 1346 he based himself on the ancient stronghold of *Insula Arsa* or Burned Isle in Loch Ken, but he seems to have made little headway. The castle, despite its island site, was dangerously exposed to attack from the Bruce strongholds in Carrick. This danger was increased throughout the summer when John Kennedy and Alan Stewart, raiding southwards from Carrick, wreaked widespread devastation in the lordship.<sup>83</sup>

In 1347, in the aftermath of the defeat and capture of David II at the battle of Neville's Cross in the previous autumn, an English expeditionary force made up of the retinues of a number of nobles from Cumberland and Northumberland entered Scotland, and after following a circuitous route via Roxburgh brought Edward Balliol to Hestan, which they

75. RMS, i, app. ii, Nos 836, 837, 1148, 1153, 1170, 1208.

76. *Registrum Honoris de Morton* (Bannatyne Club, 1853), ii, 45; R.C.Reid, 'A Mowbray Service c.1365', *TDGAS*, 3rd Series, xxxiii (1954-5), 197-9.

77. RMS, i, app. ii, No 835.

78. *The Legends of Saint Ninian and Saint Machor*, ed. W.M.Metcalf (Edinburgh, 1904), 65-8; For Jack Trumpoure see RMS, i, No 206.

79. *Rot. Scot.*, i, 625-6, 629, 654.

80. RMS, i, app. ii, No 1006.81. *CDS*, iii, Nos 1402, 1471; *Rot. Scot.*, i, 703.

82. *Rot. Scot.*, i, 722.

83. *Androw of Wyntoun's Orygynall Cronykil of Scotland*, ed. D.Laing (Edinburgh, 1872-9), ii, 477.

proceeded to refurbish and repair.<sup>84</sup> In advance of this, Edward III, still acting in accordance with the 1334 cession of territory which had given him nominal control of Dumfriesshire and the Border Counties, had confirmed Balliol's possession of his hereditary lands in Galloway east of the Cree (which lay within the 'English' sphere) and, at the time of Balliol's re-establishment at Hestan, gave him full regalian rights over them.<sup>85</sup> Balliol's installation at Hestan, however, rather than at Buittle or one of the other mainland castles of the lordship, is ample indication of the shallow grip of the English by that date, despite their victories over David II and his supporters. For Balliol true exercise of the powers of king remained effectively beyond his reach, though within Galloway he could still exercise some influence. The temporary revival of his fortunes after Neville's Cross may have afforded the opportunity to extend this control, and for a short while he seems to have enjoyed rule over a considerable area of the old lordship. His new confidence was marked by the issue of a series of charters from his stronghold in favour of his small circle of followers, which granted away portions of his paternal inheritance. The chief beneficiary was Sir William de Aldeburgh, an English knight who had been his most staunch adherent, who was to receive the lordships of Kells and Crossmichael together with the castle of Burned Isle in Loch Ken in northern Kirkcudbrightshire, plus the lands of Kidsdale in the Machars.<sup>86</sup> But the apparent strength of his position was illusory, for it was now clear that Galloway represented the last outpost of his party in Scotland, and he had but gained a respite from attack whilst the Scots negotiated with Edward III for the release of King David. Despite assurances from the English king that his support was unwavering, it became clear by 1351 that Balliol was being abandoned as an expensive liability.

The years 1351 and 1352 marked the final watershed in Balliol's twenty-year association with Galloway for, despite attempts to establish him more firmly in the lordship, his position had become precarious and exposed, crumbling swiftly once Scottish pressure was resumed. The respite, however, had been put to good use and Hestan, an isolated and inconvenient spot, though safe, was abandoned in favour of the old family fortress of Buittle, which had been provided with a new gatehouse and a strengthened curtain wall. Rather than marking an upturn in his fortunes, however, the move to Buittle was followed by a further deterioration in his support locally. The list of witnesses appended to charters granted to William de Aldeburgh in 1352 shows how restricted the group had become: the local knights Patrick McCulloch and Matthew Maclellan and their sons, John de Rerrick and Dougal MacDowall, the last perhaps a son of Sir Duncan.<sup>87</sup> The small group was to dwindle still further with the defection again of MacDowall in August 1355, a move which dealt a fatal blow to Balliol's position in Galloway when it was followed by Sir Hugh Kirkpatrick's capture and destruction of the English-held castles of Dalswinton and Caerlaverock.<sup>88</sup> Sir Duncan's defection was made just in time for, admitted to King David's peace, he was permitted to retain his lands and was confirmed in possession of those granted to him by David in 1345.<sup>89</sup> Spurred into half-hearted action by this desertion, Edward III made

84. *The Anonimale Chronicle, 1338-81*, ed. V.H. Galbraith (Manchester, 1927), 19, 28-9.

85. *Rot. Scot.*, i, 710, 715, 720.

86. *CDS*, iii, No 1578; SRO RH 1/1/2 1st December 1352.

87. *CDS*, iii, No 1578.

88. *Chron. Wyntoun*, ii, 487.

89. *RMS*, i, app. ii, No 1147; *Rot. Scot.*, i, 761.

some feeble and belated attempts to send Balliol succour, ordering William de la Vale to assist him in the defence of Buittle,<sup>90</sup> but the situation was clearly beyond redemption. With most of Galloway either in Scottish hands or devastated by raids, Aldeburgh was sent to England in May 1335 to make a last appeal for aid, but no help was forthcoming. On 20th January 1356 the whole sorry episode was brought to a conclusion at Roxburgh, when Edward resigned his crown, realm and personal lands in Galloway into the hands of the English king, going thereafter to live in England as a pensionary of the crown until his death eight years later.<sup>91</sup>

The passing of Edward Balliol in 1364 marked the end of the Balliol dynasty, there being no indication that he ever married after his abortive betrothal to Jeanne de Valois in the 1290s. Certainly he had no children and his only brother, Henry, had been killed at Annan in 1332.<sup>92</sup> The removal of the alternative to Scottish rule was a situation which some in Galloway could not endure. Faced with a final choice between exile or life under David II's regime some families, like the McCullochs, chose to follow the example of their erstwhile leader and moved to England in the vain hope that he would eventually be restored to power with English aid. Balliol's death forced a recognition of the inevitable: the Bruce establishment in Galloway was not going to be over-turned by a Balliol candidate. Only with the removal of this last forlorn hope did die-hards like the McCullochs seek a belated reconciliation with David II:<sup>93</sup> the long struggle between Bruce and Balliol was finally lost.

The sixty years of conflict with England since 1296 had seen the breakdown of the last remnants of provincial particularism in Galloway and the consolidation through military conquest and successive waves of colonisation of the grip of the Scottish crown on the region. The traditional links with Cumbria, which had been fostered in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, had been severed and a large number of the old landholding families associated with the ancient lordly house, such as the Colvends and Southwicks, had been eliminated or expelled. Severed, too, were the ecclesiastical ties with York which the diocese of Galloway had maintained since the twelfth century, although the bishops of Whithorn remained for some time the nominal suffragans of the archbishop. In place of the old families new men were introduced from other parts of Scotland and men of non-Galwegian origin established in positions of authority in the government of the lordship. Native lords did survive and thrived under the new regime, but the line of lords of Galloway of the House of Fergus had been brought finally to an end. The lordship of Galloway itself, however, did not disappear with them, for new powers were established by King David in moves aimed at avoiding the chronic weakness in the political establishment in Galloway which King Robert's settlement had engendered.

90. *Rot. Scot.*, i, 763.

91. *Rot. Scot.*, i, 787-9; E.W.M. Balfour-Neville, 'The Death of Edward Balliol', *SHR*, xxxv (1956), 82-3.

92. Balfour-Melville, 'Death of Edward Balliol', 82-3; Reid, 'Edward Balliol', 38-63.

93. *CDS*, iv, No 92. The MacCullochs were to be reconciled with the king as part of the peace proposals of 1363.