

## Special Delivery: The William Wallace Letters

The National Records of Scotland (NRS), in partnership with the Scottish Parliament, is mounting this exhibition in the Parliament from Wednesday 15 August – Saturday 8 September 2012.

The NRS and the Scottish Parliament invite pupils to contribute to the exhibition.

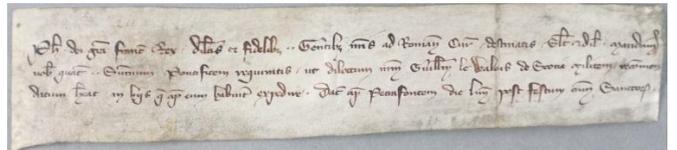
The centrepiece will be two surviving original documents with a direct link to William Wallace.



Lübeck Letter, Archiv der Hansestadt, Lübeck

The first is the so-called **Lübeck Letter**, issued by Wallace and Andrew Moray as Guardians of Scotland after their success at the Battle of Stirling Bridge in 1297.

The second document is a **letter of 1300** from the French King Philip IV to his agents at the Papal Court asking them to assist Wallace in his business before the Pope.



Letter by King Philip IV to his agents in Rome,  
The National Archives ref. SC1/30/81

**Many of the visitors to the exhibition are unlikely to know much about this turbulent period of Scottish history. Can you help us tell the story in a modern way?**

### What to do

Help us tell the story of William Wallace and the protracted struggle for power played across Europe during the Scottish Wars of Independence. Use the Timeline provided to help you cover the key events. You can use any of the following ways:

- write some modern newspaper or website headlines about key events
- write some tweets or blogs to tell the story
- write a short article or poem
- make a poster, collage or cartoon showing your visual representation of the man or of medieval chroniclers' depiction of him
- make a short film that highlights your views and those of your peers
- record a 'vox pop' containing short comments and opinions about Wallace

Here are some ideas to get you started:

### **Special Delivery: Communications across time**

News travelled very slowly in 13th and 14th century Europe. Official letters were written in Latin in pen and ink, and then delivered by hand. This could mean weeks, if not months, of journeys across land and sea. This was the case for the two documents on display that feature events in the life of William Wallace.

News travels swiftly now. Using 21st century technology and reporting styles how would you report the events taking place from the death of the Maid of Norway in September 1290 to the execution of William Wallace in August 1305?

### **What do you think about how William Wallace has been depicted through time?**

When people talk about William Wallace, the words that are often used are – hero, patriot, leader – but in reality, we know very little about him. Was he of noble or humble birth? How did he rise to power? What did he look like?

Few original documents survive to provide us with a clear account of his life.

Most of the stories we know appear in chronicles and epic poems, but these were mainly written many years after his death and for specific purposes.

Historians continue to debate this turbulent period of Scottish history but do agree that William Wallace

- fought battles on Scottish and English soil
- helped govern Scotland for a short period of time
- sought help from the King of France to support Scotland as a political ally against England, and to make contact with the pope
- died a horrible death in London.

WALLACE



William Hole, Processional Frieze in the Central Hall of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery (detail), Scottish National Portrait Gallery

## Information for teachers

We are happy to receive individual or group submissions from all schools in Scotland. Articles should be short and visually appealing and can be hand written or typed. Video footage should be no more than 3 minutes in length. Art work can be scanned and sent electronically or originals submitted by post.

Images and text should be submitted as jpeg or png and videos ideally in Quicktime movie of 1920 x 1080 pixels in HD, PAL

Contributions must be submitted before Friday 15th June 2012 and can be made by:

- Uploading scanned images, text or video on **Glow** (go to National Groups/Scottish Parliament)
- Emailing contributions to [education.service@scottish.parliament.uk](mailto:education.service@scottish.parliament.uk)
- Posting contributions to

**William Wallace Exhibition  
Education Service  
Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP**

### All submissions should include:

Pupil names  
School name  
Contact name and email/telephone no.



Cast of the seal of the Guardians of Scotland, National Records of Scotland ref. RH17/1/17

### Education Programme during exhibition period

The NRS and Scottish Parliament Education teams are planning a comprehensive education programme at the Scottish Parliament to coincide with the exhibition including:

**Friday 24th August – Debate** (As part of the 2012 Festival of Politics, this is open to the general public and senior secondary pupils and teachers are invited to attend).

**Thursday 30th August – National Glow Meet** 14.00 – 14.45 Explore the exhibition and quiz the experts - Dr Alan Borthwick, Head of Medieval Records, National Records of Scotland and Dr Fiona Watson, independent researcher and author of *'Under the Hammer: Edward I and Scotland, 1286 - 1307'*.

**Friday 31st August** 14.00 – 16.00 **CPD** for teachers including discussions with Dr Alan Borthwick and Dr Fiona Watson.

**Monday 3rd – Friday 7th September** 10.00 - 12.00 and 13.00 - 15.00. **Workshops** for upper primary and secondary schools, **bookings required by Friday 29<sup>th</sup> June.**

If you would like to register for any of the above please contact the Scottish Parliament Education Service on 0131 348 5401 or [education.service@scottish.parliament.uk](mailto:education.service@scottish.parliament.uk)

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### Timeline

YEAR	DATE	EVENT
1286	19 March	Death of King Alexander III of Scotland.
1290		Scotland and England agree a treaty that Alexander's grand-daughter Margaret, known as the Maid of Norway, will marry the son of King Edward I of England.
1290	September	Margaret dies in Orkney on her journey from Norway leaving no clear heir to the Scottish throne.
1291	August	Edward I is asked to help in deciding the Scottish succession. The Great Cause begins.
1292	17 November	John Balliol is chosen as king of Scots.
	30 November	John Balliol is crowned king of Scots but has to do homage to King Edward.
1294	29 June	Edward I summons the Scots to fight in France.
1295	5 July	The Scots seek an alliance with the King of France, formally completed in October 1295.
1296	30 March	The Scots attack England, followed by the siege of Berwick and Edward's successful campaign in Scotland.
	July	Balliol is unable to sustain his kingship, surrenders to Edward I, resigns from the throne and is held in captivity in England.
1297	May	William Wallace kills Heselrig, the Sheriff at Lanark.
	September	Wallace and Andrew Moray join forces.
1297-1298		While Edward I is campaigning in Flanders against the French, the Scots under Wallace have their best successes.
1297	11 September 11 October	Battle of Stirling Bridge where the Scots, under Wallace and Moray, defeat the English army. Wallace and Moray issue the Lubeck letter.
1298	March	Edward I returns from fighting in Flanders. Wallace becomes the sole Guardian of Scotland and issues the Scrimgeour charter.
	July	Despite the defeat of Wallace at the Battle of Falkirk and his resignation as

		guardian, resistance to Edward continues in Scotland.
1299	July	Edward releases Balliol from captivity into papal rather than French custody.
1299	August	A council meeting is held in Peebles where, according to an English spy, the Bruce and Comyn factions come to blows, partly because of concern over the nature of Wallace's departure for France.
1299 - 1300		In France, Wallace and other Scottish knights are sufficiently well-thought of to receive significant sums of money from King Philip IV. It seems that Wallace intends to travel to Rome, but the sources do not reveal if he actually did.
1300	7 November	Philip IV issues letter of recommendation for Wallace.
1301	Summer	The Scots contingent at Rome, headed by Baldred Bisset, state their case to the pope, stressing the long-standing independence of the Scottish kingdom, and inform him of what they see as unwarranted English interference in their affairs during the last few years.  Both the Pope and King Philip of France review their positions in relation to supporting Scotland or England. The Pope releases John Balliol into the custody of King Philip of France.
1302	January	Scots agree to a nine month truce with Edward I.
1303	May	King Philip is forced into a treaty with England which isolates Scotland.
	June	Edward launches another invasion into Scotland.
1304	Summer	Edward captures Stirling Castle and the Scottish nobles surrender to him.
1305	3 August	William Wallace is captured.
	23 August	William Wallace is tried for treason, charged with holding parliaments that he is not entitled to do. He is found guilty and executed in London.

### Suggested support materials for teachers:

- The Wars of Independence on 'Scotland's History' at <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/scotlandshistory/warsofindependence/index.asp>
- *The Scottish Wars of Independence 1286 – 1328*, Andy MacPhee, [Hodder and Gibson New Higher History series, 2010].
- Walter Bower's *Scotichronicon*, ed. D. E. R. Watt and others, 9 volumes (1987-1998).
- *William Wallace: Man and Myth*, Graeme Morton, [Sutton Publishing, 2004].
- *The Wallace Book*, ed. Edward J Cowan, [2007]
- *Robert Bruce: And the Community of the Realm of Scotland*, Geoffrey Barrow, [4<sup>th</sup> edition, Edinburgh University Press, 2005].