

## **Why is Stirling Castle the bloody heart of Scotland?**

### **Video transcript for 'Catalyst for Bannockburn'**

**TONY POLLARD**

Bruce spent the next year in hiding. But then in 1307 his luck changed. Edward I died on his way to Scotland.

But his son, Edward II, had other plans. He decided to leave Scotland for another day giving Bruce a much needed breathing space.

Bruce took full advantage and set about taking Scotland back castle by castle.

It was to be a war of attrition counted in years rather than months. By 1314 the English occupying forces had been all but driven out of Scotland.

**(MALE VOICE)**

Messengers came to the King with news of the destruction of the Scottish cities, the capture of castles and the breaching of the surrounding walls.

**SCOTT MCMASTER**

When he captures castles he reduces them. When he takes towns he reduces the walls so they can't be regarrisoned [yeah] because without a castle you can't collect tax, you can't dispense law, these are, these are fundamental in the medieval period.

**TONY POLLARD**

The last major castle that remained under Edward's control was Stirling. Bruce's men laid siege. Edward's chronicle tells of the dramatic moment he receives news that he's about to lose this castle as well.

**(MALE VOICE)**

The constable of Stirling pointed out to the King how he had been compelled by necessity to enter upon truce.

**TONY POLLARD**

The constable had agreed to hand over the castle to the Scots unless an English force had arrived to relieve him by the 24th of June 1314.

**NEIL OLIVER**

So they come away from Berwick-upon-Tweed on the 17th of June?

**TONY POLLARD**

They cross the border on the 17th and they're running all the way up very quickly - these are just the night stops. So it's one night, two nights, three, four, five and they're at Falkirk.

**NEIL OLIVER**

And that's by the 23rd of June?

**TONY POLLARD**

23rd they're in the vicinity and we get our first day's contact from the 23rd.

**NEIL OLIVER**

And they've come, and they've come, there has been a muster of English forces. So there's cross bow men from Bristol, there's spearmen from Wales...

**TONY POLLARD**

Yeah.

**NEIL OLIVER**

...they're all up and they've had to bring everything with them?

**TONY POLLARD**

And it must've been quite a sight, this thing must've been tailing back for miles. And in fact if we were the English garrison of the castle we'd quite clearly see Edward approaching.

**NEIL OLIVER**

Amazing to see that from up here.

**TONY POLLARD**

If you'd be up here and you'd be a, you'd be an English man surrounded by Scots you'd be delighted to see it obviously.