

# **BRAVEHEART**

## **Fact or Fiction?**

Braveheart is not completely historically correct. Wallace was not a small child when the English executed his father and brother. According to Blind Harry, a poet who lived two hundred years after him, Wallace was betrayed exactly 35 years after his birth to the day.

His family was not poor farmers. They were landowners of the minor nobility and vassals of the Clan Stewart. The hangings in the barn were true. These people were his mother's family (Crawford) and other nobles. The Wallaces were originally from what is now Wales or Strathclyde and descended from Eimerus Galleus. There is also speculation that they were originally from Normandy.

William Wallace may have been married to a Bradfute, heiress of Lamington (first name unknown), and may have had a daughter. As there are no records, it is not known if the daughter survived the murder of Wallace's wife. Some historians believe that the daughter may have lived and married a Baillie of Baliol family. The Clan Shaw recorded that she had a daughter who married a Shaw. The male line of Malcolm Wallace (William's father) died out, William and his brother and the Elderslie property passed to the Adam Wallace line of Riccarton-Craigie, the ancestor of the present Chief of the Clan and Name of Wallace.

As William Wallace was a Knight and a minor noble, he did not wear a great kilt. He wore chain mail and armor. He certainly did not paint his face with wode, a blue tint that was used by the Picts of Roman times (the Roman word for those people was "Picti", which meant "painted ones"). The dress worn in the movie was from the 16<sup>th</sup> through the 18<sup>th</sup> century, while the movie depicted events and people of the 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> century.

After the possible death of his wife, Wallace had a mistress, but it was not Princess Isobel of France, the wife of Edward II. He was not the father of Edward III. Wallace could not have had an affair with the Princess of Wales, as there never was a Princess of Wales at that time. Edward II married Princess Isobel in 1312, long after the death of Wallace and Edward I.

Edward II was portrayed as gay and may well have been, but he did father three children: Edward III, born November 13, 1312; Eleanor, born June 18, 1318; and Joan, born July 5, 1321.

Battle dress was habergione or armor of a sort of chain or ringed mail. Over it was worn a "gown" or surcoat to prevent the sun from heating the armor. Hence, Coat of arms. It was a long, loose dress, which reached mid-leg, open front and back for convenience of riding. It was belted and hooded. It was also called a tabard. Both the front and back were emblazoned with their arms so as to be known to all.

The "steylle capleyne" or iron hat was rimmed and had a convex crown. It was kept from turning around by cords fastened to the shoulders. Sometimes it was held by chains. It had openings for sight. Wallace never covered his face. Limbs were encased in boiled leather. On them were fixed shin guards and knee plates of iron.

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Wallace favored the huge two-handed sword. At times he also used spear and mace. For close encounters in confined spaces, he used a dagger in each hand. His sword is now in the National Wallace Monument in Abbey Craig at Stirling. It is 5' 4" long with the blade 2 ¼" at the guard and ¾" at the point. It weighs 6 pounds. This is a reduced size as it has been repaired twice. Blind Harry wrote: "Fit for archangel to wield, but light in his terrible hands."

In 1505 by order of King James IV, the sword was outfitted with new binding with silk cords, new hilt and pommel, and new scabbard and belt. In 1825, due to an improper appraisal as to age, the sword was sent to the Tower for repair, where the repairs of 1505 were removed, and a common 15<sup>th</sup> century handle was affixed.

We know of his "trial" and execution. He was not taken to the gallows in a cart but dragged facedown and naked behind a horse. A crown of thorns was placed on his head. He was hanged but taken down before he died. When disemboweled, his entrails were burned before his eyes. His head was placed on London Bridge. The quarters of his body were placed in the corners of England leaving no whole body to be buried where people could visit. They did not want him idolized, honored, or immortalized.

His mother was buried at the cathedral of Dunfermline. It has been stated that fragments of his body were buried there by his followers. After his execution a rumor quickly swept England that an English monk had a vision of angels taking Wallace's spirit with much honor.

According to Blind Harry, Wallace was tall (6' 7") and well proportioned. He was exquisitely beautiful with bright, piercing eyes. His hair and beard were auburn and tended to curl. His brows and lashes were light, and his lips were round and full. On the left under his chin was a scar. There may have been others but that was the only visible one. He stood majestically head and shoulders above the tallest man. He had incredible strength, fleetness, and agility. Except on horseback, nobody could outrun him or escape him whenever he pursued them. He was unrivaled as an archer and all-powerful as a swordsman.

He was well trained in military tactics and became the teacher for his countrymen. He is supposed to have had dreams and visions of saints and angels who told him to fight the English and how to win.