

# Marjory Bruce Cairn



A few stories surround the history associated with this cairn.

On March 2<sup>nd</sup> 1316, Princess Marjory Bruce, daughter of King Robert the Bruce, was riding her horse between what is now Paisley and Renfrew and was then known as the lands of Knock. Marjory was married to Walter Fitzalan, High Steward to the King. As she was returning to her husband's castle at Renfrew, she fell from her horse. She was heavily pregnant at the time.

What happened next differs in detail:

Perhaps the trauma of the fall caused her to go into premature labour. The history of Paisley Abbey tells that Marjory survived the fall and was taken to Paisley Abbey where her baby was born but she died. Another legend is that her fall caused a dislocation of her neck bone and these injuries were so severe that they caused her death. Attention turned to the safe delivery of the child. With no skilled surgeon at hand, a countryman took the initiative and performed a caesarean operation where Marjory lay. A third version suggests that Marjory died in childbirth at home.

Regardless of the precise details of his birth, the baby boy survived.

The child grew up to become a most influential person and ruled his country from 1371 to 1390 as Robert II, the First of the Stewart Kings of Scotland. He is on record as being the oldest person ever to wear the Scottish crown, having taken the throne at the late age of 55. Robert II was the first of 15 monarchs of the Stewart dynasty which lasted for 343 years until the reign of Queen Anne, the first sovereign of Great Britain.

During his reign, Robert earned the nickname "King Blearie", derived from the old Scots word "blearie" or "bleir" meaning something that obscures the sight. Like his birth, the origin of this nickname has various stories attached to it. Perhaps it was from a cut to the eye received during the caesarean operation, perhaps a later battle scar or possibly a recurrent eye infection. While she was never queen herself, Robert's mother was referred to as "Queen Blearie" and an older monument, near the present day cairn, was called "Queen Blearies Stane" by locals. Marjory Bruce was buried at Paisley Abbey.

## Sources and further information:

- Rowand, David; Golden Threads: A Look at Paisley's Past, Paisley Daily Express 1999
- [www.educationscotland.gov.uk](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk)
- [www.paisleyabbey.org.uk](http://www.paisleyabbey.org.uk)

