# District FALKIRK

Situated about 30 miles south of Stirling and midway between Glasgow and Edinburgh, Falkirk (and its District) is on a route between Edinburgh, Linlithgow, Stirling and the North, and it would be early seen that it was advantageous to have a settlement which was not more than a day's journey between those other ancient places of habitation, Linlithgow and Stirling.

As a center of population Falkirk has remained an important place for centuries. Even before the dawn of recorded history its position on a high ridge of land between the moorlands to the south and the wet carselands to the north must have appealed to the primitive inhabitants of the country as a desirable place in which to erect their rude huts and to throw up their defenses against the possibility of attack.

Traces of the occupation of the district by these early settlers are still occasionally dug up, but the recorded history of the Falkirk district cannot be said to begin until the year A.D. 82, when the Roman general Agricola launched his invasion of Caledonia.

Falkirk again comes clearly into the light of History in the year 1080, when Robert, son of William the Conqueror, has his army turned back at Egglesbreth, the Welsh name by which the settlement on the ridge of land above the carse was then known. The town again emerges from the mists of the past in the record that Malcolm Canmore built a church there in 1090.

By that time the district as far west as the valley of Carron was thoroughly Saxon. Among the Saxon families which lived in the area was one names Levings, the original members of which came over among the early immigrants, and were granted lands in the Lothians. This family was destined to occupy a high place in the affairs of their adopted country and to become overlords of the district containing the settlement which was to become the town of Falkirk.
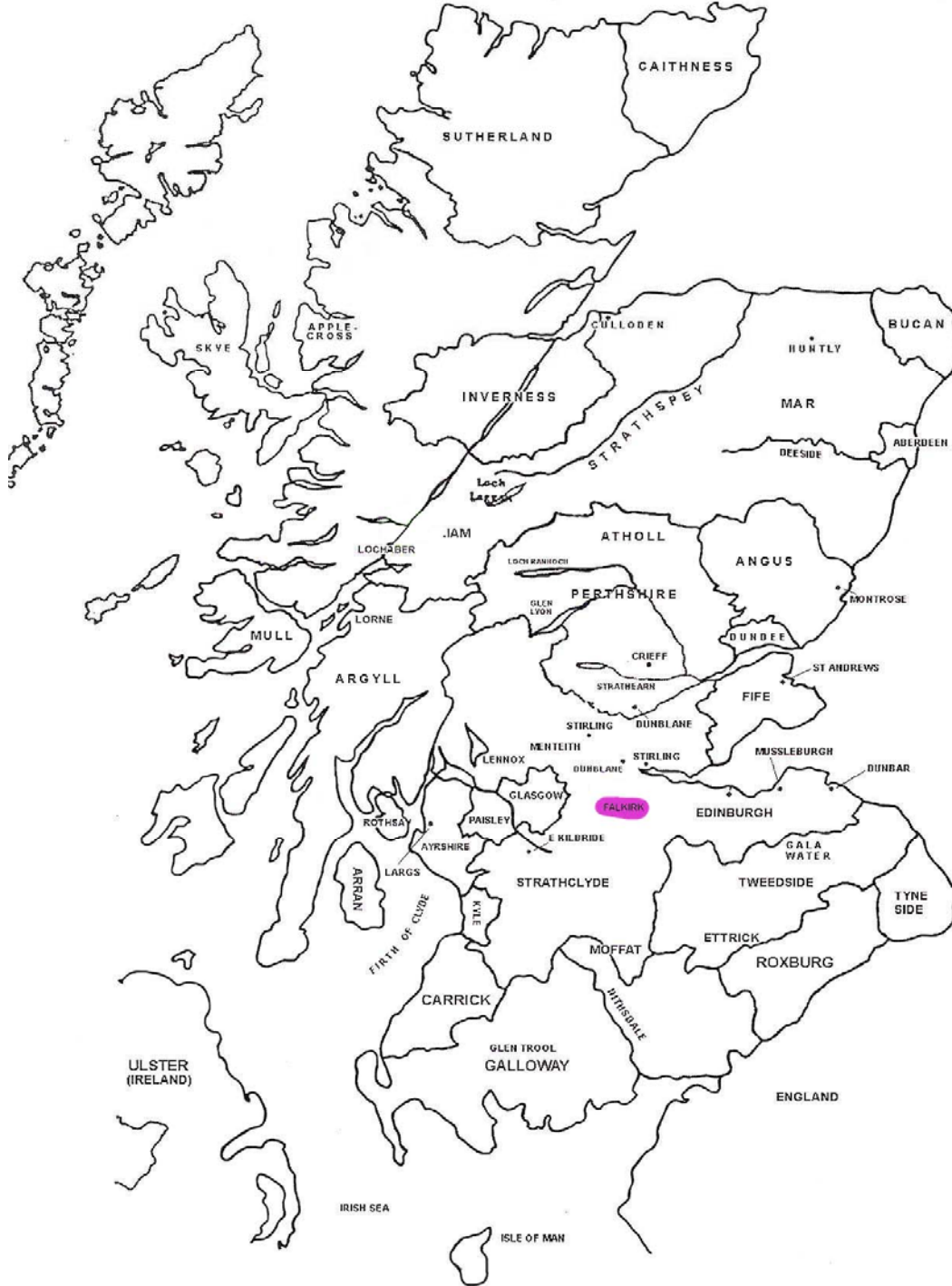
In July 1298, the first battle of Falkirk was fought on a site which has been a subject of historical dispute. It has generally been believed, however, that the fields of battle extend from what is now the High Street of Falkirk to Bainsford. During the battle the "schiltrons" of Sir William Wallace bravely held their own until they were mown down by the English archers

Falkirk was never a Royal Burgh, but it became a Burgh of Regality with Lord Livingston as overseer, in 1646. For a century nothing of note seems to have occurred until the second battle of Falkirk in January, 1746. This was a far different battle to the one in which Wallace's schiltrons has made such a heroic stand.

The Coat of Arms of the Burgh of Falkirk is described – "Sable on a bend bretessed accompanied by six billets Or, three in chief and three in base, the Church of Falkirk, between two swords and two Highland claymores both in saltire, the former surmounted of a shield of 1298, the latter of a targe of 1746, all proper. On a compartment below the shield with the motto, "Better Meddle wi' the De'il than the Bairns o' Fa'kirk" is placed behind the shield for supporter, a lion rampant, affrontee gules armed and langued azure, crowned with a mural crown argent, masoned sable, and in an escorel over the same, this motto, "Touch touch not the cat"

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The Scottish Society of Louisville, Inc.
PO Box 32248
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