

= Andrew Harclay , 1st Earl of Carlisle =

Andrew Harclay , 1st Earl of Carlisle (ca . 1270 ? 3 March 1323) , alternatively Andreas de Harcla , was an important English military leader in the borderlands with Scotland during the reign of Edward II . Coming from a knightly family in Westmorland , he was appointed sheriff of Cumberland in 1311 . He distinguished himself in the Scottish Wars , and in 1315 repulsed a siege on Carlisle Castle by Robert the Bruce . Shortly after this , he was taken captive by the Scots , and only released after a substantial ransom had been paid . His greatest achievement came in 1322 , when he defeated the rebellious baron Thomas of Lancaster at the Battle of Boroughbridge on 16 ? 17 March . For this he was created Earl of Carlisle .

As one of the main military leaders on the border to Scotland , Harclay became frustrated with Edward II 's inactivity , particularly the humiliating English defeat at the Battle of Old Byland on 14 October 1322 , which made it clear that the war could not be won . Harclay initiated negotiations with the Scots on his own accord , and on 3 January 1323 , he signed a peace treaty with Robert the Bruce . The act was without royal sanction , and amounted to treason . The king issued an arrest order for the earl , and on 25 February Harclay was taken into the king 's custody . He was arraigned before royal justices on 3 March , denied a hearing , and executed the same day . He was hanged , drawn and quartered , and the various parts of his body displayed in different parts of the country . Only after five years was he allowed a proper burial , but the conviction for treason was never annulled .

= = Family @-@ background and early career = =

The family name of Harclay derives from Hartley in Westmorland . Though relatively little is known about his early years , Andrew Harclay was probably the eldest son of Sir Michael Harclay and Joan , daughter of the Yorkshire landowner William Fitzjohn . His younger brother was the theologian Henry Harclay , a Chancellor of the University of Oxford . Michael Harclay was a retainer of the Clifford family , and served as sheriff of Cumberland from 1285 to 1296 . The first documented appearance of Andrew Harclay was at a Westmorland eyre in 1292 , at which point it must be assumed that he was at least twenty @-@ one years old , and therefore born in the early 1270s .

= = Military career = =

His military career can be traced back as far as 1304 when he took part in a campaign in the Scottish Wars . In 1309 , he received a royal order to assist Robert de Clifford in the defence of the Marches against Scotland . His standing in local affairs was further advanced in 1311 , when he was appointed sheriff of Cumberland , like his father had been before him . This was followed by his election as Knight of the Shire in 1312 , and in December 1313 , he distinguished himself as the leader of the defence against a Scottish invasion . He received further acclaim in the summer of 1315 , when he successfully defended Carlisle Castle against a siege by Robert the Bruce . For this he was awarded a gift of 1000 marks from the king .

Late in 1315 or in 1316 , Harclay was taken captive by the Scots , who demanded 2000 marks in ransom . His meteoric rise over the previous years had made him some enemies in local society , who now took the opportunity to spread slanderous rumours about him at court . The king nevertheless helped raise the necessary money to secure Harclay 's freedom , but for the next few years he seems to have been out of royal favour . It was not until 1319 that he once more was appointed sheriff , and at the same time made keeper of Carlisle and Cockermouth castles , and Warden of the West Marches . In 1321 he also received a personal summons to parliament .

= = Boroughbridge = =

Harclay 's most prominent achievement came with the Battle of Boroughbridge in 1322 . The battle was the culmination of an ongoing struggle between King Edward II and his most powerful earl ,

Thomas of Lancaster . The conflict stemmed from disagreement over the handling of the war with Scotland ; Lancaster , and many others , found the king 's war effort lacking . After failing to incite an insurrection against the king , Lancaster was in March 1322 fleeing northwards from the royal army . Meanwhile , Harclay , as sheriff of Cumberland , was ordered by the king to levy the forces of the northern counties of Cumberland and Westmorland , and move south . His orders were to meet up with the royal army , but while stopping at the town of Ripon in Yorkshire , he received intelligence that Lancaster would arrive at nearby Boroughbridge the next day . Harclay decided to take the initiative , and occupy the bridge that would prevent Lancaster 's passage across the River Ure .

Lancaster 's army arrived at Boroughbridge on 16 March . The rebels were greatly outnumbered ; while Harclay commanded around 4000 men , Lancaster only had some 700 knights and men @-@ arms , with followers , in his service . In addition to this , the loyalist forces were highly trained and experienced from the Scottish Wars . Harclay used tactics the English had learned from the Scots in these wars . The Lanercost Chronicle describes how Harclay employed the Scottish schiltrons ? a compact formation of infantrymen with pikes or spears , highly effective against Lancaster 's cavalry @-@ heavy forces . According to The Brut , Lancaster tried to persuade Harclay to join his side , in return for great rewards in land . Harclay had previously been a supporter of Lancaster , possibly also the earl 's retainer ; in 1318 , a general royal pardon for Lancaster and his adherents contained Harclay 's name . On this occasion , however , Harclay decided to remain loyal to the king , and turned down the earl 's offer .

The engagement was short and one @-@ sided . Lancaster 's plan was to charge across a ford in the river , while the Earl of Hereford ? one of the few magnates who had remained loyal to Lancaster ? crossed the bridge . Hereford was killed on the bridge , his companion Roger de Clifford , 2nd Baron de Clifford was badly wounded , and this advance failed . Lancaster , meanwhile , came under such heavy archery fire that he had to call off his attack . Defections during the night , combined with royal reinforcements , forced him to surrender the next day , and on 22 March he was executed . The king was greatly pleased with Harclay 's effort , and rewarded him lavishly . On 25 March , Harclay was created Earl of Carlisle , and given land worth 1000 marks a year . On 15 September , he was also made chief Warden of the Marches .

= = Treason = =

On 14 October 1322 , the English army was routed by the Scots , under the command of Robert the Bruce , at the Battle of Old Byland in Yorkshire . The English commander , John of Brittany , Earl of Richmond , was taken prisoner , while the king himself barely escaped capture . It was the worst defeat the English had suffered in the wars since the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314 . Harclay had received a summons to join the royal army , but had not been able to bring his troops south in time to come to the king 's rescue . The event convinced him that the war against Scotland could not be won under the leadership of the present king . Instead he entered into direct negotiations with the Scots , without the king 's sanction . On 3 January 1323 , he signed a peace treaty with Robert the Bruce at Lochmaben .

The treaty recognised Scotland as an independent kingdom . It stipulated that Robert was to pay 40 @,@ 000 marks to the English , and that Edward should be allowed to choose a wife from his own family for Robert 's heir . Implied in the text , however , was an alliance between Robert and Harclay to use force against Edward , if necessary , to implement the terms of the treaty . It seems unlikely that Harclay expected royal clemency for his actions . More likely he contemplated a defection to the side of Robert the Bruce ; rumour had it he even planned marrying one of Bruce 's daughters . It is nevertheless likely that his action grew out of genuine concern with the northern situation , and was a desperate attempt to make the best out of a difficult situation .

Though historians have generally shown understanding for Harclay 's actions , it is nevertheless common to refer to the event as " Harclay 's treason " . In the words of Maurice Keen : " To make a truce , or to indeed to give safe @-@ conducts or make any agreement with the king 's enemies without proper grant of powers , again constituted lèse majesté and can be found defined as such in other military cases " . Harclay had received such powers in February 1322 , but he was considered

to have overstepped his prerogative by the 1323 treaty . It is also possible that Edward held a grudge against Harclay for the latter 's failure to come to the rescue at Byland , and that this was behind the king 's later , severe reaction . There is , however , no evidence that Harclay received the royal letter in time to arrive at the battlefield any earlier than he did .

= = Death and aftermath = =

When Edward found out about Harclay 's treason , he issued an order for the earl 's arrest . As Harclay attempted to garner support for his cause , the king began to fortify the northern castles . The stalemate lasted until 25 February , when Sir Anthony Lucy arrested the earl at Carlisle Castle . Lucy , who acted with only a small force , was clearly trusted by Harclay , so the arrest must have been conducted as a surprise manoeuvre . The enmity between Lucy and Harclay could stem from a dispute over the honour of Papcastle . In 1322 , Harclay had also briefly dispossessed Lucy of his lands after the 1322 rebellion , even though Lucy had taken no part in that event .

On 3 March , Harclay was arraigned before a royal justice in Carlisle , but was denied a proper hearing . He was brought forward appraised in his robes of estate as a knight and earl . His spurs of knighthood were hewed off , and his sword was broken over his head . He was stripped of his robes , and proclaimed to be no knight , but a knave . He was then convicted as a traitor , and condemned to be hanged , drawn and quartered . He behaved with dignity at his execution , where he maintained that he had acted as he did out of concern for the best interest of the country . After his death , his head was taken to the king at Knaresborough in Yorkshire , before it was hung up on London Bridge . The four parts of his body were dispersed around the country , and displayed in Carlisle , Newcastle , Bristol , and Dover .

Harclay 's head was on display in London for five years before it was taken down . His sister petitioned the king to return the various parts of the body for a Christian burial , and in 1328 her request was granted . Further clemencies were not awarded . In the reign of Edward III , Harclay 's nephew Henry petitioned to have the charge of treason annulled , but the petition was ignored . As for the peace treaty , the wisdom of Harclay 's policy was vindicated after his death . Edward II 's inability to win the war against the Scots , combined with his refusal to give up his claim on the Scottish crown , proved untenable in the end . Furthermore , it was Harclay 's military skills and well @-@ organised forces that gave what little protection the northern borders had over the previous years . Less than three months after Harclay 's execution , Edward agreed on a thirteen @-@ year truce with Scotland .

= = Harclay in fiction = =

Harclay 's unauthorised negotiations with Robert the Bruce are dealt with in some significant detail in *The Price of the King 's Peace* , the third volume of Nigel Tranter 's Bruce trilogy , where he is called " Andrew Harcla " .

= = External sources = =

The Battle of Boroughbridge at The Battlefields Trust .