

= Gilbert de Clare , 8th Earl of Gloucester =

Gilbert de Clare , 8th Earl of Gloucester , 7th Earl of Hertford , 10th Lord of Clare , 5th Lord of Glamorgan (c . 10 May 1291 ? 24 June 1314) was an English nobleman and a military commander in the Scottish Wars . In contrast to most English earls at the time , his main focus lay in the pursuit of war rather than in domestic political strife . He was the son of Gilbert de Clare , 7th Earl of Gloucester , and Joan of Acre , daughter of Edward I. The older Gilbert died when his son was only four years old , and the younger Gilbert was invested with his earldoms at the young age of sixteen . Almost immediately , he became involved in the defence of the northern border , but later he was drawn into the struggles between Edward II and some of his barons . He was one of the Lords Ordainers who ordered the expulsion of the king 's favourite Piers Gaveston in 1311 . When Gaveston was killed on his return in 1312 , Gloucester helped negotiate a settlement between the perpetrators and the king .

Now one of Edward 's strongest supporters , he accompanied the king on a campaign to Scotland in 1314 , when several other nobles refused . He was killed at the Battle of Bannockburn on 24 June , under somewhat unclear circumstances . Gloucester was the most prominent of the casualties of the battle , which ended in a humiliating defeat for England . As he had no issue , his death marked the end of the prominent de Clare family . His estates were divided between his three sisters , one of whom was married to the king 's new favourite , Hugh Despenser the Younger . Despenser 's ruthless expansion of the de Clare lordship of Glamorgan in Wales led directly to the troubles of Edward II 's later reign , including a rebellion in the Welsh Marches , the defeat of the Earl of Lancaster at the Battle of Boroughbridge , and eventually the deposition of the king by Roger Mortimer and Queen Isabella in 1326 .

= = Family background and early life = =

Gilbert de Clare was the son of Gilbert de Clare , 7th Earl of Gloucester ? known as Gilbert ' the Red ' ? who in 1290 married Joan of Acre , daughter of Edward I. As a condition for the marriage , the earl had to surrender all his lands to the king , only to have them returned jointly to himself and his wife for the lifetime of either . This grant was made on the condition that the lands would pass to the couple 's joint heirs , but if they were childless to Joan 's heirs from any later marriages . The younger Gilbert was born the next year , around 10 May 1291 , securing the inheritance for the de Clare family , but his father died only four years later , on 7 December 1295 , while the boy was still a minor . Because of the joint enfeoffment , Joan kept the custody of the family lands , and did homage to the king on 20 January the next year .

In 1297 , Joan secretly married Ralph de Monthermer , a knight in the late earl 's household . This enraged Edward I , who had other marriage plans for Joan . The king imprisoned Monthermer , but later relented , and sanctioned the marriage . Because of the previous settlement , Joan was still titled countess , and her new husband became Earl of Gloucester and Hertford . This , however , only lasted for the life of Joan , who died in 1307 . Only a few months later , Gilbert was granted his inheritance , and by March 1308 made Earl of Gloucester and Hertford , at the young age of sixteen . This grant was made by Edward II , who succeeded his father Edward I in July 1307 . It was previously believed that Edward II and Gilbert were brought up together , but this is based on a confusion with another person of the same name . This other Gilbert de Clare , who was closer to the king in age , was in fact the earl 's cousin , the son of Thomas de Clare , Lord of Thomond .

= = Early service under Edward II = =

Gilbert 's first years as earl were predominantly concerned with the Scottish Wars . He had no personal interest in the region , but the Welsh Marches , where his landed interest lay , were largely pacified at the time , and Scotland presented a good opportunity to pursue military glory and reward . He was almost immediately trusted with important military commands on the northern border , and served as warden of Scotland from 1308 to 1309 , and as captain of Scotland and the northern

marches in 1309 . He led an expedition to relieve the castle of Rutherglen in December 1308 . The war effort , however , was not pursued with the same intensity by Edward II as it had been by his father . The new king 's neglect of the Scottish Wars allowed Robert the Bruce to regain the initiative in the war .

This situation led to frustration among the English nobility . In addition to the Scottish issue , there was also discontent with the king 's treatment of his favourite , Piers Gaveston . Gaveston 's promotion from relative obscurity to Earl of Cornwall , combined with his arrogant behaviour , caused resentment among the established nobility . Gloucester was initially not hostile to Gaveston , who had married Gloucester 's sister Margaret in October 1307 . He did , however , share in the other earls ' frustration with Edward 's lack of initiative towards Scotland . In 1308 , therefore , Gloucester was among the earls who demanded Gaveston 's exile , a demand the king was forced to meet . After this , he seems to have been reconciled with the king , and in 1309 he acted as a mediator when the earls agreed to Gaveston 's return . Relations between the king and the nobility deteriorated even further , however , after Gaveston 's return . In 1310 , a group of so -called Lords Ordainers were appointed to draft the Ordinances of 1311 , a set of restrictions on the rule of Edward II , including a renewed exile for Gaveston . Gloucester , who was still a supporter of the king , was not initially among the Ordainers , but was appointed on 4 March 1311 , upon the death of the Earl of Lincoln .

= = Escalation of the national conflict = =

In spite of his participation in the baronial reform movement , Gloucester still maintained the trust of the king . He , Gaveston and the Earl of Warenne were the only earls to accompany the king on a Scottish campaign in 1310 ? 11 . In March 1311 , while the Ordinances were still in the workings , Gloucester was appointed guardian of the realm while the king was still in Scotland . There are signs that he might have fallen out with Thomas , Earl of Lancaster ? who was at this point the leader of the opposition against the king ? over a feud between two of their respective retainers . When Gaveston once more returned from exile , however , Gloucester sided with the baronial opposition . The earls divided the country into different parts for defence , and Gloucester was given charge of the south . In June 1312 , Gaveston was captured by Guy de Beauchamp , Earl of Warwick , who was working in cooperation with Lancaster . Aymer de Valence , Earl of Pembroke , who had the custody of Gaveston and had guaranteed his safety to the king , appealed to Gloucester , as Gaveston 's kinsman , for assistance . Gloucester , however , refused to help , and Gaveston was killed . This act brought the country to the brink of civil war , and Gloucester was one of the few men who was still trusted enough by both sides to be able to take on a role as mediator . In the following months , he was among the main negotiators working towards an agreement between the king and the offending earls , an effort that was at least temporarily successful .

Gloucester remained in the inner circle around the king over the next months . In the summer of 1313 , he was again guardian of the realm while the king was in France , and in February 1314 , he was sent to France on a diplomatic mission regarding Gascony . The greatest problem of the reign , however , remained the unresolved conflict with Scotland , and the resurgence of Robert the Bruce . In the summer of 1314 , Edward finally embarked on a major Scottish campaign . The objective was to protect the English garrison at Stirling Castle from an attack by Bruce . The campaign was impeded by the absence of some of the greater magnates , such as Lancaster and Warwick . There were still a number of great lords in the king 's company , including Humphrey de Bohun , Earl of Hereford , Pembroke and Gloucester . These men were valuable to the king for their ability to raise large numbers of troops from their dominions in the Welsh Marches . On 23 June 1314 , the royal army had passed Falkirk and was within a few miles of Stirling . There were , however , signs of strife between the earls of Gloucester and Hereford . Gloucester had been given the command of the English vanguard , a position he had earned through his loyalty to the king . Yet Hereford , who had been placed under Gloucester 's command , believed the command belonged to him , in his capacity of hereditary Constable of England .

= = Death at Bannockburn = =

Gloucester was involved in a brief skirmish with the Scots on 23 June , the day before the main battle . While the king considered whether to camp for the night or to engage the Scots immediately , Gloucester and Hereford ? either through insubordination or a misunderstanding ? charged directly into the place called the New Park , where the Scots were encamped . The English immediately ran into difficulties , and Hereford 's cousin Henry de Bohun was killed by King Robert the Bruce . It was perhaps during the subsequent retreat that Gloucester was thrown off his horse , but managed to escape unharmed . The next day the English were still not entirely decided on the course of action . While Gloucester took the part of certain experienced captains , recommending that Edward avoid battle that day , the younger men surrounding the king labelled this lethargic and cowardly , and advised attack . According to the *Vita Edwardi* , when Edward grew angry and accused Gloucester of treason , the earl forcefully replied that he would prove his loyalty on the field of battle .

The most detailed account of the Earl of Gloucester 's death at the Battle of Bannockburn is the chronicle *Vita Edwardi Secundi* . This account is written as a moral tale , expounding on the earl 's heroism and the cowardly conduct of his companions . For this reason , its historical accuracy must be taken with some caution . According to some accounts , Gloucester rushed headfirst into battle in the pursuit of glory , and fell victim to his own foolishness . The *Vita* , on the other hand , claimed that , as the earl was vigorously trying to fend off the Scottish attacks , he was knocked off his horse , and killed when his own men failed to come to his rescue . It is also likely that the quarrels between Gloucester and Hereford over precedence could have contributed to the chaotic situation . According to one account , Gloucester rushed into battle without a distinguishing coat of arms , exposing himself to the Scottish soldiers , who otherwise would have been eager to secure a valuable ransom .

After Gloucester was killed , the English army soon fell into disarray , and the battle resulted in a resounding victory for the Scots , and a humiliating withdrawal for the English . It was widely agreed that Gloucester , with his proud family history and valuable estates , was the most prominent of the many casualties that day . Robert the Bruce mourned his death and stood vigil over Gloucester 's body at a local church . Later he allowed its transfer to England , where the earl was buried at Tewkesbury Abbey , on his father 's right @-@ hand side .

= = Dispersal of estates and aftermath = =

Gloucester 's political importance did not end with his death ; his disappearance from the political scene had immediate consequences . In his Welsh lordship of Glamorgan , the uncertain situation caused by his death caused a short @-@ lived rebellion in 1316 . In Ireland , where he also held large possessions , the power vacuum he left behind facilitated the 1315 invasion by Robert the Bruce 's brother Edward . The greatest consequences , however , resulted from the division of the de Clare estates . In 1308 , Gilbert de Clare had married Maud (or Matilda) de Burgh , the daughter of Richard de Burgh , Earl of Ulster . The couple left no surviving issue , so his death marked the end of the great de Clare family . The family lands were worth as much as £ 6 @,@ 000 , second only to those of the Earl of Lancaster among the nobility of the realm .

The lands went into royal possession while the matter of inheritance was being settled . By the entail of 1290 , the lands could only be inherited by direct descendants of the seventh earl and Joan of Acre . Maud managed to postpone the proceedings by claiming to be pregnant , but by 1316 it was clear that this could not be the case . The late earl 's sisters , Eleanor , Margaret (now widowed after the death of Gaveston) and Elizabeth were by 1317 all married to favourites of Edward II : Hugh Despenser the Younger , Hugh de Audley and Roger d 'Amory respectively . The three were granted equal parts of the English possessions , but Despenser received the entire lordship of Glamorgan in Wales , politically the most important of the de Clare lands .

Not content with his part , Despenser used his relationship with the king to impinge on the lands of other Marcher lords . This caused resentment among such men as Hereford and Roger Mortimer , who rose up in rebellion in 1321 . The rebellion was crushed , but resistance continued under the

Marcher lords ' ally Thomas of Lancaster , who was defeated at the Battle of Boroughbridge in 1322 , and executed . Although this victory temporarily secured Edward 's position on the throne , he was eventually deposed in 1326 by Roger Mortimer , with the help of the king 's wife Queen Isabella . The title of Earl of Gloucester was recreated by Edward II 's son Edward III in 1337 , for Hugh de Audley .

= = Ancestry = =