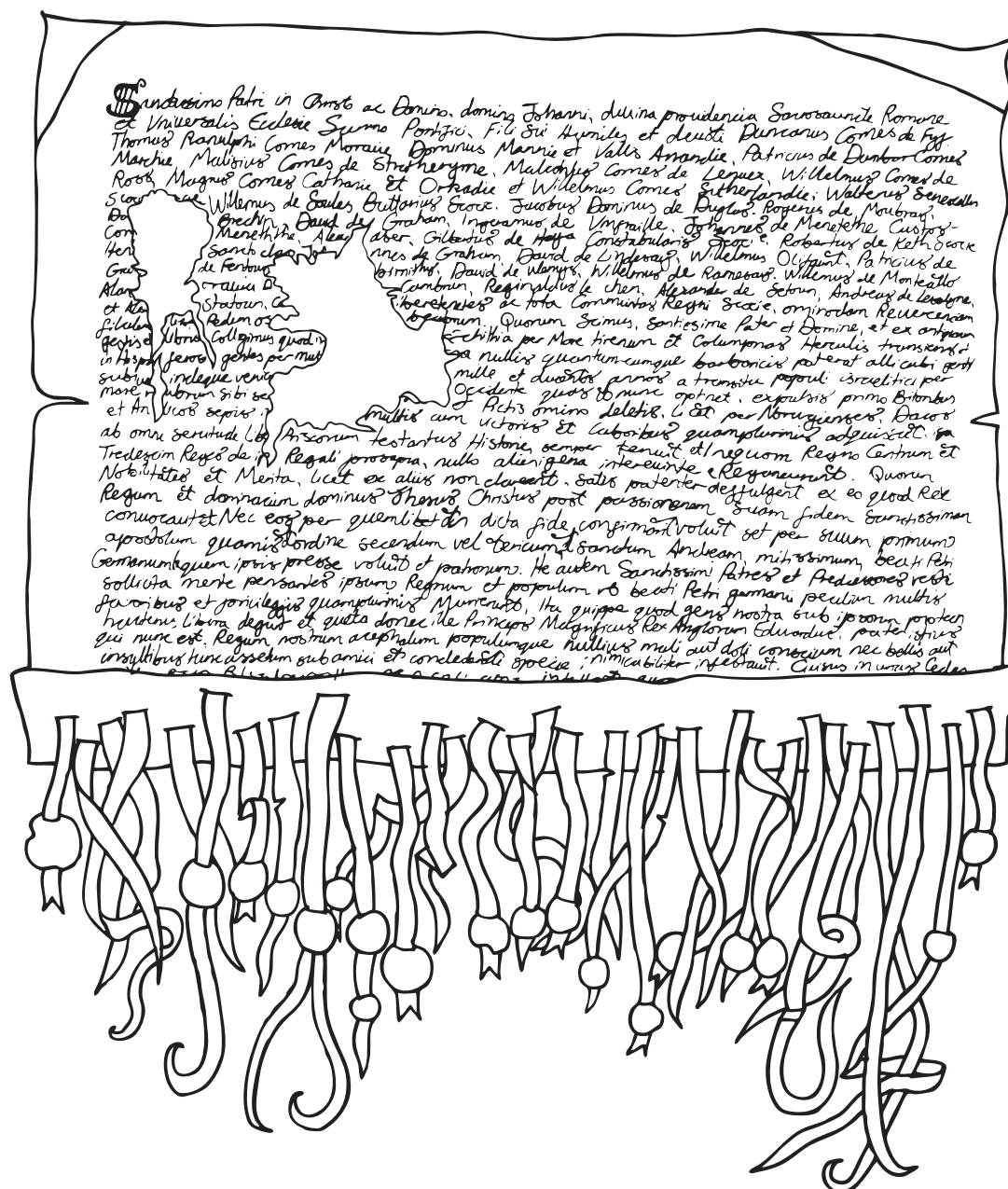


In this activity booklet, you can find out about the Declaration of Arbroath – a famous letter and one of Scotland’s most important historic documents. Use your imagination to draw, design and create. You can also colour in the illustrations!

What is the Declaration of Arbroath?



The Declaration of Arbroath was a letter written 700 years ago in 1320, when the Scots wanted to stop King Edward II of England trying to rule over Scotland.

It was sent by some of the most powerful people in Scotland to Pope John XXII. They wanted him to recognise Robert the Bruce as their king. As the Head of the Catholic Church, the Pope could help sort out disagreements between countries.

The letter was written on parchment in Latin, a language used by the church. It was originally called the Barons' Letter and a copy was made when it was written. Much later it became known as the Declaration of Arbroath. The copy is now looked after by National Records of Scotland in Edinburgh.

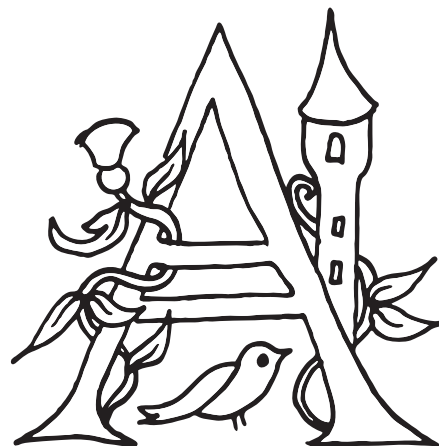
What's it got to do with Arbroath?

Arbroath Abbey, on the east coast of Scotland, was chosen as the place where the Declaration would be sealed and sent off to the Pope in France. The man in charge of the abbey, Abbot Bernard, was chancellor of Scotland and was responsible for all official documents for Robert the Bruce. Arbroath was also quite far away from England and next to the sea – so the letter could be sent safely by boat to France.

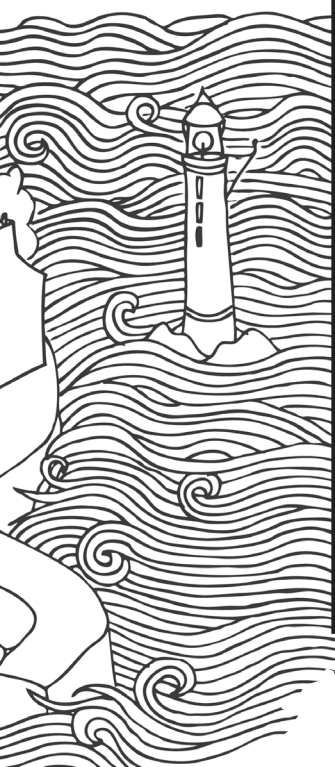
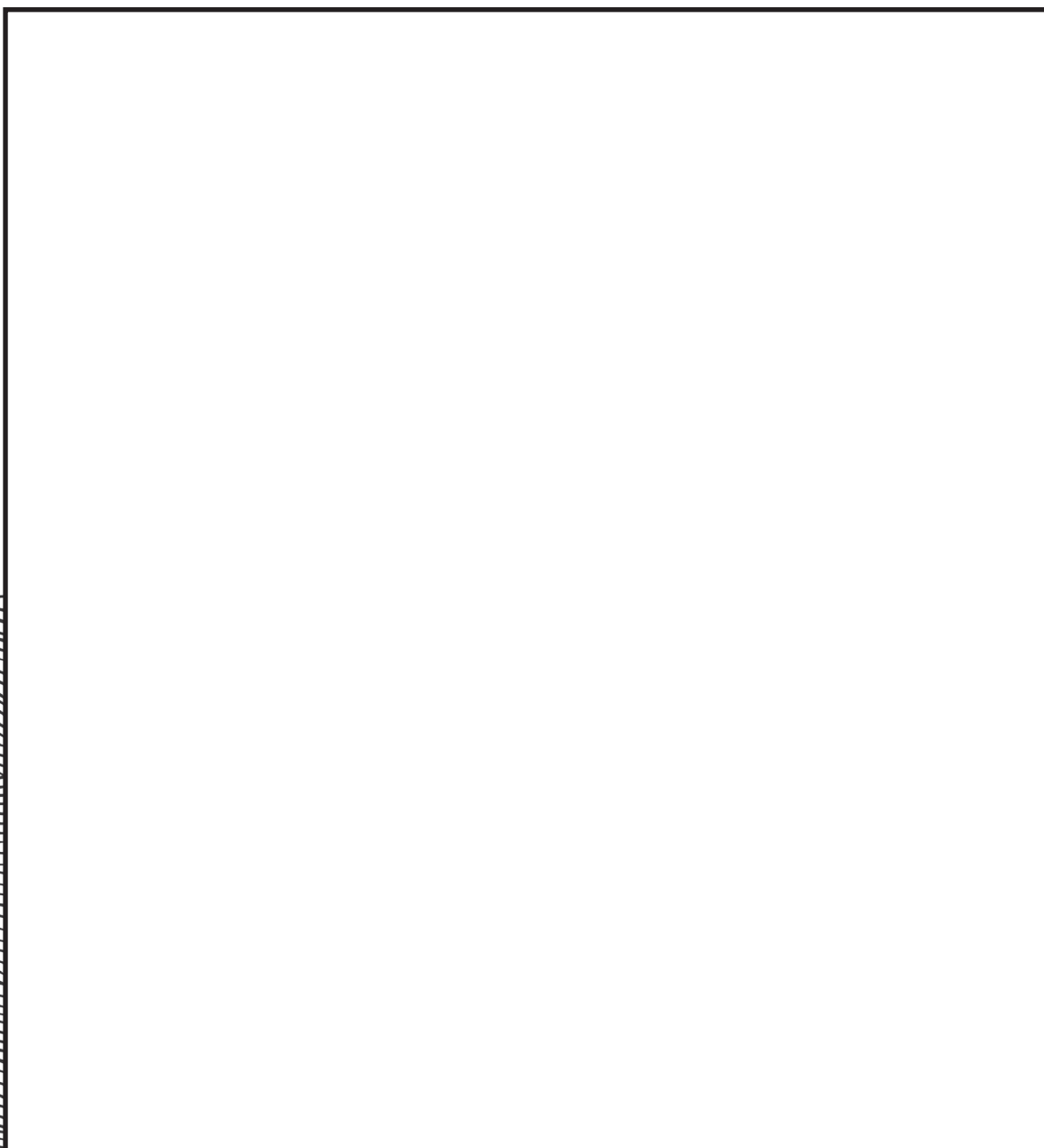




Back in 1320, most people could not read or write. But the monks who lived in abbeys were very well educated and good at writing. As well as official letters, they wrote, copied and illustrated books. They decorated their writing with drawings of leaves, flowers, animals and patterns.



**If you were a monk how would you decorate your writing?
Look at the example on this page, then draw the first letter
of your name in the space below, and try decorating it.**



What does the letter say?



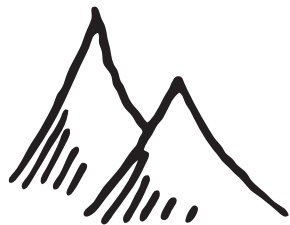
The Declaration of Arbroath starts by telling a story about how Scotland began. It claims that the Scots took a long journey to arrive in Scotland, many centuries ago.

It describes how they “journeyed from Greater Scythia by way of the Tyrrhenian Sea and the Pillars of Hercules, and dwelt for a long course of time in Spain.”

The story isn’t true, but at that time many people believed the Scots originally came from a country far away. The writers wanted the Pope to know they had a long history of adventure and courage.

Use the comic strip below to illustrate the Scots' voyage from Greater Scythia, through the Tyrrhenian Sea and the Pillars of Hercules.

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Mountains



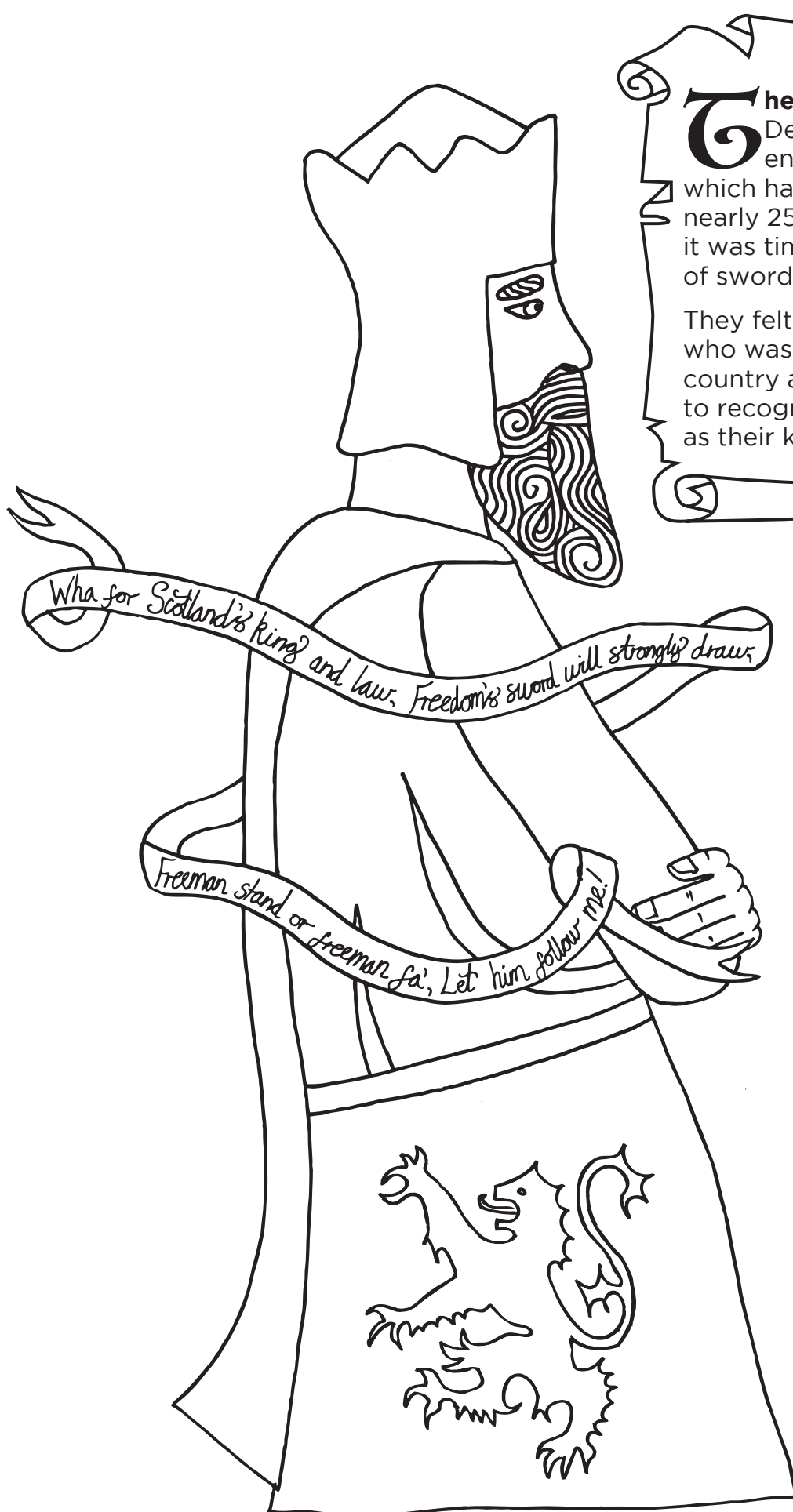
Sea monster



Village

In the box below, can you describe the imaginary journey?
What adventures might the Scots have had on the way?
What people or creatures might they have met?

Why was the Declaration written?



The Scots who sent the Declaration wanted to end the war with England which had been going on for nearly 25 years. They decided it was time to use words instead of swords.

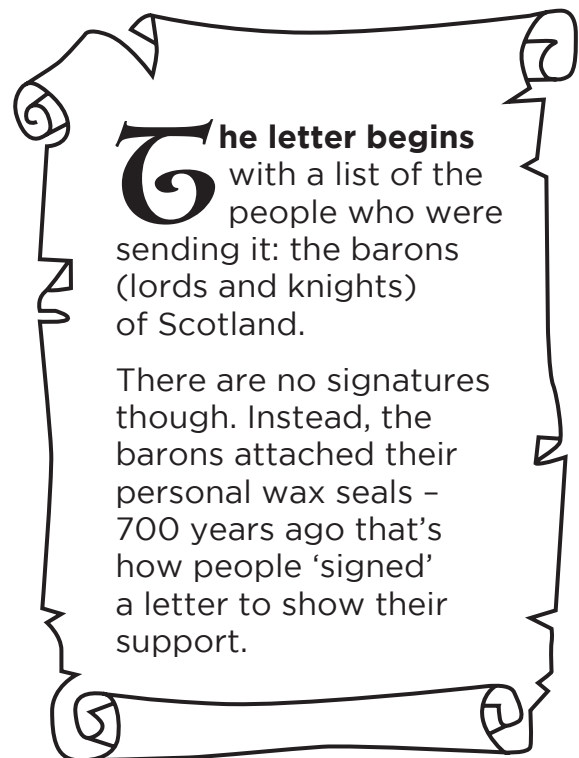
They felt very strongly about who was in charge of their country and wanted the Pope to recognise Robert the Bruce as their king.

The words on Bruce's ribbon are from 'Scots Wha Hae', a famous song by Robert Burns. It was inspired by a speech Bruce is supposed to have given to his troops before the Battle of Bannockburn.

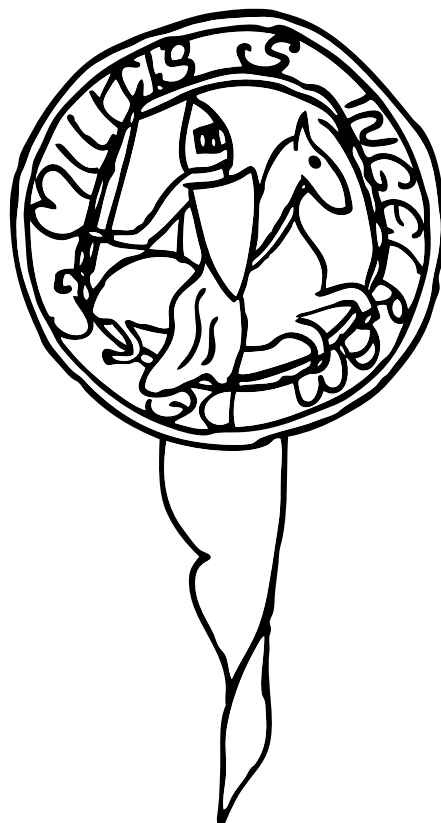
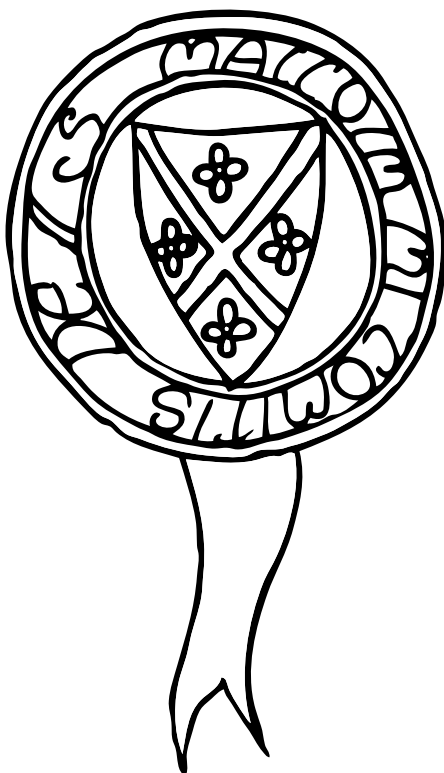
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Who supported the Declaration?

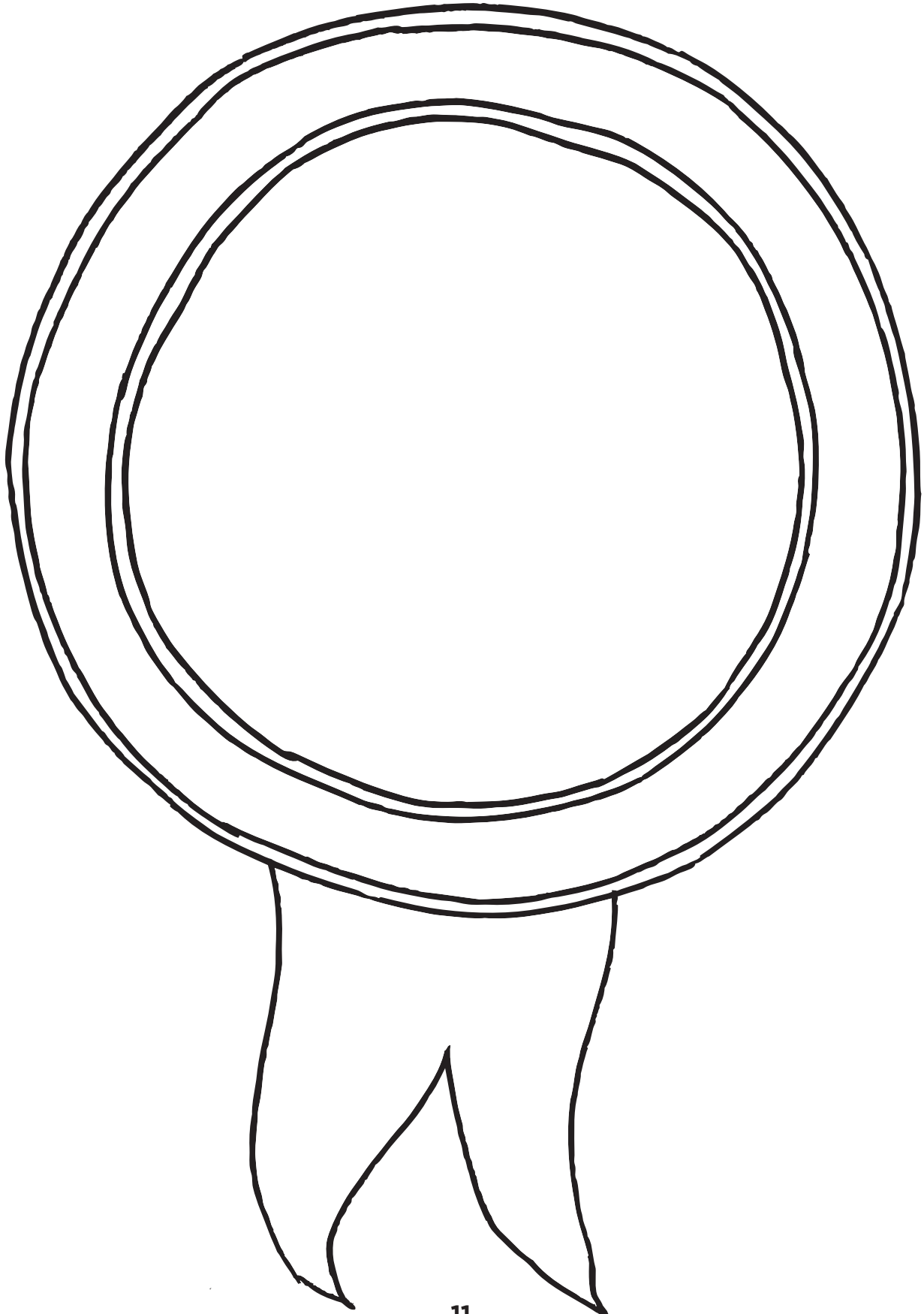


Here are some examples of seals inspired by those on the Declaration.

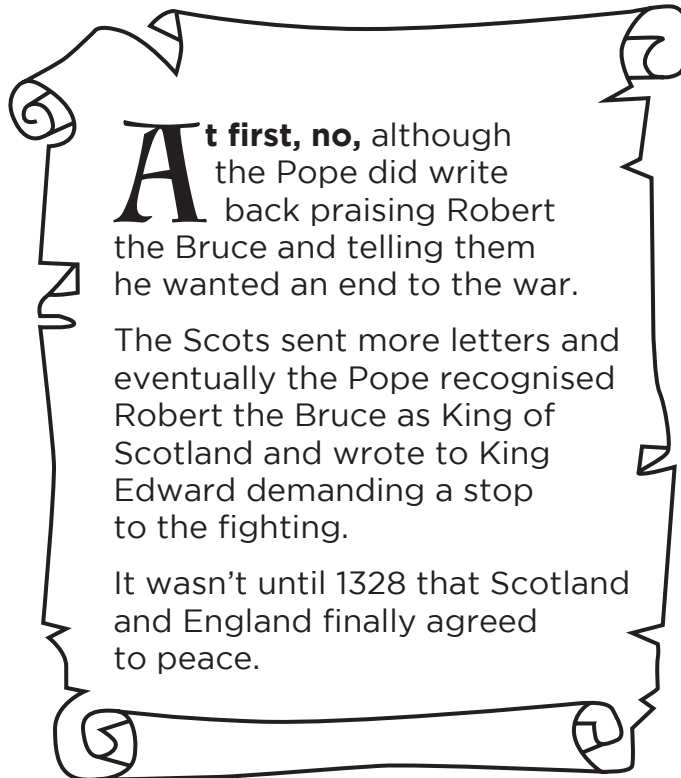


If you could design a seal to represent you, what would it look like?

Try drawing your own seal below. Think about who you are, the things you like, and your hobbies. Include a motto that says something about you, for example 'always friendly' or 'strong and brave'.



Did it make a difference?



What could you do to make your school or home a more peaceful place? Have you done what your parents have asked you to do or been kind or friendly?

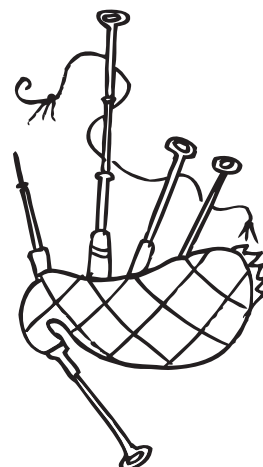
Use the space below to design a peace bench/peaceful space, or draw a poster showing others how they can help create a peaceful school or write an acrostic poem using the word PEACE to show what you could do: each line of the poem should begin with one of the letters in the word PEACE.



Is the Declaration still important?

The Declaration of Arbroath is one of Scotland's most famous and important documents.

For some people, the Declaration of Arbroath has become an important symbol of Scottish identity along with traditional symbols such as tartan and the thistle.



Can you think of any other symbols that represent Scotland? Do you know any Scottish songs or poems? Do you have a favourite Scottish place or food? Using the space below, try writing or drawing something you feel represents Scotland today.

Did you know?

St Andrew is the Patron Saint of Scotland.

The Declaration of Arbroath said that Scotland was under St Andrew's protection.

St Andrew is known for his X-shaped cross, which is still used today in the flag of Scotland and is called the Saltire.





HISTORIC
ENVIRONMENT
SCOTLAND

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