

Far from being the homespun-wearing, oatmeal-eating man of the glens of Hollywood's imagination, Wallace grew up in the genteel manor house owned by his father in southwest Scotland and attached to the following of the great aristocrat James the Stewart. But there is also no doubt that if he was not the 'runaway from righteousness' of English propaganda, he did, at some stage, cross the line into outlawry.

This was precisely the period, throughout Britain, when wronged knights were cropping up in popular culture like mushrooms after the autumn rain. And even after cutting through the dense thickets of mythology surrounding Wallace, there is still enough substance to see how he became set on his career of patriot-avenger.

