

The Inventory of Historic Battlefields

The Battle of Ancrum Moor

Designation Record and Summary Report

The Inventory of Historic Battlefields is a list of nationally important battlefields in Scotland. A battlefield is of national importance if it makes a contribution to the understanding of the archaeology and history of the nation as a whole, or has the potential to do so, or holds a particularly significant place in the national consciousness. For a battlefield to be included in the Inventory, it must be considered to be of national importance either for its association with key historical events or figures; or for the physical remains and/or archaeological potential it contains; or for its landscape context. In addition, it must be possible to define the site on a modern map with a reasonable degree of accuracy.

The aim of the Inventory is to raise awareness of the significance of these nationally important battlefield sites and to assist in their protection and management for the future. Inventory battlefields are a material consideration in the planning process. The Inventory is also a major resource for enhancing the understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of historic battlefields, for promoting education and stimulating further research, and for developing their potential as attractions for visitors.

Designation Record and Summary Report Contents

Name	Inventory Boundary
Alternative Name(s)	Historical Background to the Battle
Date of Battle	Events and Participants
Local Authority	Battlefield Landscape
NGR Centred	Archaeological and Physical
Date of Addition to Inventory	Remains and Potential
Date of Last Update	Cultural Association
Overview and Statement of Significance	Select Bibliography

Inventory of Historic Battlefields

ANCRUM MOOR

Alternative Names: None

27 February 1545

Local Authority: Scottish Borders

NGR centred: NT 623 267

Date of Addition to Inventory: 21 March 2011

Date of last update: 14 December 2012

Overview and Statement of Significance

Ancrum Moor is highly significant in the context of both the Rough Wooings and the wider context of Anglo-Scottish border warfare. Very few 16th century battlefields survive well within the British Isles, and Ancrum Moor is one of the best preserved examples. The battle is also notable as being one of the few examples where archery and firearms were used together. Arquebuses were used in comparatively large numbers for the period, and the battlefield has a high research potential for assessing the use of the two forms of projectiles in parallel during this transitional period of warfare. It is also notable because it is a rare known example of Border warfare, most of which has survived only in historical references and Border ballads. This is one of the few occasions where a large-scale raid ended in a confrontation between armies in a pitched battle, and this is likely to have left significant traces in the landscape.

The Battle of Ancrum Moor was part of Henry VIII's campaign known as the Rough Wooing. The objective was to force the Scots to accept a marriage between Henry's son Edward and the infant Mary, Queen of Scots. While raiding in the Borders, the English army was attacked by a Scottish force at Ancrum Moor, just outside Jedburgh. The English were defeated in the battle and suffered heavy losses, including the deaths of two senior commanders.

The victory of the Scottish force ended the English raiding for a time and, in the wake of the defeat, France sent troops to help the Scots attack England. However, in the event no major campaign was launched, as the Scottish Regent, the Earl of Arran, feared provoking the English king into further attacks. In the longer term, the defeat at Ancrum Moor ultimately led Henry to escalate his military action against Scotland, culminating in the catastrophic defeat of Scottish forces after his death at the Battle of Pinkie in 1547.

Inventory Boundary

The Inventory boundary defines the area in which the main events of the battle are considered to have taken place (landscape context) and where associated physical remains and archaeological evidence occur or may be expected (specific qualities). The landscape context is described under *battlefield landscape*: it encompasses areas of fighting, key movements of troops across the landscape and other important locations, such as the positions of camps or vantage points. Although the landscape has changed since the time of the battle, key characteristics of the terrain at the time of the

Inventory of Historic Battlefields

battle can normally still be identified, enabling events to be more fully understood and interpreted in their landscape context. Specific qualities are described under *physical remains and potential*: these include landscape features that played a significant role in the battle, other physical remains, such as enclosures or built structures, and areas of known or potential archaeological evidence.

The Inventory boundary for the Battle of Ancrum Moor is defined on the accompanying map and includes the following areas:

- The summit of Peniel Heugh, where the Scots first appeared to the English.
- The land to the north and east of Dere Street. The probable location of the advancing Scots after their descent from Peniel Heugh
- The line of the modern A68 and the Roman Road of Dere Street. The two possibilities for the 16th century 'Jedburgh Road' which the English marched down.
- An area to the south of the modern A68 which follows the outline of the largest portion of Ancrum Moor identified on 18th century estate maps. This area fits the topographic descriptions of the main area of combat.
- The well preserved landscape characteristics of the battlefield including the plateau of Ancrum Moor, the views north over Tweeddale from the English vantage point at Lilliardsedge, views across the open moorland from the summit of Peniel Hill and the spatial relationship between the moor and the Roman Road of Dere Street.

Inventory of Historic Battlefields

Historical Background to the Battle

The English army consisted of 3,000 mainly German mercenaries, 1,500 English Borderers and 700-800 Scottish 'assured men'. They had been at Melrose and were on their way back south towards Jedburgh. Having seen a small Scottish cavalry troop moving from Peniel Heugh hill back to the north-west, the English army turned back to pursue them. The English appear to have been divided into two battles. The vanguard was led by Layton and consisted of around 2,000 spearmen, hagbutters and archers. The second battle was led by Eure and consisted of around 3,000 men. Both battles had spears in the centre and one wing of archers, the other of hagbutters. What they did not know was that the Scots comprised a force of around 2,500 men including Fife lances and Border Reivers, accompanied by cannon.

The English attacked uphill, thinking that they were attacking a small body of cavalry. However, the main Scottish army came over the brow of the hill and pushed the vanguard back into the rest of the English army. As the situation deteriorated for the English army, the 'assured men' ripped off the red crosses that marked them out and attacked the English troops as well; this betrayal was subsequently blamed as the key factor for the English defeat. The English lines collapsed and a rout began. Both Layton and Eure were killed, along with up to 800 of their army; prisoners were numbered at around 1,000.

Events & Participants

The battle involved the Scottish Regent, James Hamilton Earl of Arran, and Archibald Douglas Earl of Angus.

James Hamilton, Earl of Arran, was a significant figure in the politics and wars of James IV. He was a grandson of James II and nephew of James III. He was as much a mariner as a soldier in his early career, commanding a Scottish fleet that helped the Danes defeat a Swedish rebellion in 1502, then led a fleet to put down a rebellion in the Western Isles in 1504. He commanded the Scottish navy in actions against the English in 1513, attacking the main English base in Ulster at Carrickfergus before heading to France to support the French King; however, before he arrived, James IV had been killed at Flodden, and Arran had to return home. He was accompanied by the representative of John Stewart, Duke of Albany, who would later become regent, but Arran initially acted against Albany and was besieged and in the end Hamilton had to make terms with the Regent. In 1516, on the death of the infant Alexander, James V's brother, Arran was declared next in line to the throne. He had constant antagonism with Angus, leading to the Cleanse the Causeway incident when Angus and his supporters drove Arran out of Edinburgh on 30 April 1520; however, by the following year, Arran had re-taken control of the city. In 1524, he supported Margaret as she declared James to have reached his majority; he was one of the Council that was to rotate custody of the King, and was supposed to take custody from Angus when the latter refused to hand over James. Despite this, Arran considered that his interests would be best served by allying with Angus and thus it was that he found himself defending the approach to Edinburgh against Lennox on

Inventory of Historic Battlefields

behalf of Angus. Despite this, when James V escaped from Angus in 1528, Arran was a close advisor of the King until the Earl died in 1529.

Archibald Douglas, Earl of Angus, was one of the most powerful Scottish nobles of the sixteenth century. He first came to prominence on 6 August 1514 when he married Margaret, the Dowager Queen, widow of James IV, mother of James V and elder sister of Henry VIII of England. The marriage was instrumental in breaking the fragile peace in Scotland as Margaret's regency was to last until James V came of age or she re-married. She had been holding a delicate balance between the pro-French and pro-English factions at Court, but her marriage to Angus gave impetus to the pro-French group to push her out and install the Duke of Albany as regent. She eventually fled to England, leaving Angus in Scotland, where he promptly took a mistress and started spending Margaret's money. The ensuing enmity between the couple coloured Scottish politics for years to come. Angus was charged with high treason by the Duke of Albany, and was sent as a prisoner to France in 1522. He escaped to London in 1524 and then returned to Scotland with the support of Henry VIII. In 1524, Margaret made an alliance with the Earl of Arran and Angus had to take refuge in his ancestral home of Tantallon Castle. However, with the influence of Henry VIII from south of the border, Angus was able to force his way back into power and was appointed to the Council of Regency, which looked after the King in rotation despite Margaret's declaration in 1524 of his majority. Angus was the first of the council to have physical custody of the King, but refused to hand him over at the end of his three month period. He imposed himself as the Chancellor of Scotland, filled all positions of authority with Douglas family members and supporters and kept the young King effectively a prisoner. The Battles of Darnick and Linlithgow Bridge were both attempts to wrest control of the King from Angus. Despite his victory in both battles, Angus would only retain his control for another two years. James V escaped his custody in 1528 and began to rule on his own account, with his first order of business the removal of Angus, who had retreated to Tantallon again. Despite considerable effort on the part of James, Angus held out until 1529 when he was able to escape to England under a treaty between James and Henry VIII. Angus remained in England until James' death in 1542, at which point he returned on a mission from Henry to arrange a marriage between the infant Mary Queen of Scots and the future Edward VI. However, in 1544 he was in open conflict with the Earl of Arran, son of his ally in 1526, and imprisoned briefly. The English Rough Wooing (1543-1550), which attempted to coerce the Scots into accepting the marriage between Mary and Edward, hit Douglas lands hard and caused Angus to settle with Arran and the two fought together at the Scottish victory of Ancrum Moor and the defeat at Pinkie in 1547. He eventually died in 1557.

The English army was led by Sir Ralph Eure and Sir Brian Layton. Eure (sometimes Evers in the sources) was the Warden of the English Middle March, while Layton was governor of Norham Castle, an important border garrison. In 1544 they had led a raid into Scotland that had included the burning of Melrose Abbey and the consequent destruction of Douglas family tombs, earning a personal enmity from Angus.

Inventory of Historic Battlefields

Battlefield Landscape

While there are fairly detailed accounts of the fighting, there is less useful detail about the landscape of the battle. Ancrum village lies to the south of the battlefield, below the scarp slope that leads to Ancrum Moor. The Scots seem to have appeared to the English on Peniel Heugh, but then retreated to the north-west. The English pursued but were held up trying to cross Sandy Causeway, which must have been a narrow causeway across boggy ground, though its precise location is unknown. The English advance would have been north-west towards Lilliardsedge, a scarp leading down into the bowl of Tweeddale. The primary sources suggest that the main bulk of the Scottish army were out of sight below Lilliardsedge, and that Eure and Layton had no idea that there was more than a small cavalry troop of Scots.

The battle was fought on the undulating moorland of Ancrum Moor. Ancrum Moor is located in a depression on a high plateau overlooking the Ale Water to the south and the Tweeddale to the north. The northern scarp of the plateau (Lilliardsedge) falls steeply into the river valley of the Tweed. Although the landscape of the moor has been dramatically altered through the drainage of marshland and enclosure, key landscape features and views are largely intact and it appears that the overall character of the battlefield survives. The topography of the moorland, which must have played a key role in the battle, is well preserved as open farmland and the spatial relationships between key landscape features such as the summit of Peniel Heugh, the line of the Roman road through the moorland and the undulating terrain of the landscape survive intact. Important views such as those from Lilliardsedge looking over Tweeddale to the north are intact and provide the same outlook as it would have done in the 16th century.

The defined area is presently mainly farmland with small areas of forestry plantation. The A68 bisects the battlefield and may have impacted on physical evidence.

Archaeological and Physical Remains and Potential

In terms of archaeology, Ancrum may be of great significance, because it involved the use of substantial numbers of both arquebus and longbow. It was one of the earliest battles in Britain to have seen a significant number of arquebus deployed. The reference to two Scottish soldiers being killed by their own artillery fire also raises the slight possibility of case shot having been being fired, at least by the Scots, though at this date it may be that the bullets were not of lead but rather of iron or even pebbles. If case shot was fired, then there is the potential for further significant artefactual material. The association of bullet and arrow, the former in the right wing and the latter in the left, of both English battles offers the potential for the recovery of patterns of bullets providing clear indication of where the ferrous arrowheads should be sought. Also, the battle formation with two battles, each with wings of shot, one of arquebusier and one of archers, with the vanguard to the fore seconded by the main battle, is potentially important for the understanding of earlier battle tactics and their transition.

Inventory of Historic Battlefields

The investigation of battle archaeology of this transitional period in equipment and tactics should provide an important link between the well understood archaeology of 17th century battles and the poorly understood archaeology of Medieval battles. There are so few battlefields of the 16th century in Britain that any which survives in a reasonable state of preservation must be considered of high importance.

Various stray finds of armour and equipment are known from the area, generally found in the 19th century to the south-west of Ancrum Moor; an example is the discovery of a 'burgonet' found on the slopes near to the River Ale. However, these are away from the battlefield and cannot be assumed to relate to the fighting, though they may represent the rout. There are no records of human remains being discovered, but there were significant numbers of dead on the English side; there is thus a possibility of human remains being encountered in the area.

The sources indicate large numbers of hagbutters on the English side, so a substantial number of lead bullets will have been fired. In addition, the English seem to have had a substantial number of archers, perhaps as many as 1,000, and there are potentially large quantities of ferrous arrowheads that could be recoverable through archaeological investigation. The Scots appear to have used cannon, as there is a reference to two Scots being killed by their own artillery. The English may also have used cannon, as one of the sources states that the Scots captured some artillery pieces as the English fled. This means that there may be round shot or case shot, depending on how close the English were to the Scottish cannon.

Lilliard's Stone, a c.18th century stone slab commemorating the death of a young women in the battle, is the closest to a personal memorial that exists, though its historicity is doubtful.

Although there is mention in some sources that the Scots dug pits to ensnare the cavalry, it is highly likely that this tale was borrowed from the Bannockburn story.

Cultural Association

Lilliard's Stone or the 'Maiden's Tomb' located at Lilliardsedge is the only commemorative monument associated with the battle. The inscription on the slab, which tells the tale of a girl who supposedly fought and died in the battle, is likely to be a later and erroneous association. The story of the Maiden Lilliard first appeared in written form in the 18th century, marking a nationalist mood that was apparent in some circles during the period of the Jacobite risings. The tale has however given the battle a degree of prominence and longevity because of this 'Boudicca of the North'. In 1995 an orchestral suite entitled *Lilliard* was composed by a local music teacher about the battle and the Maiden Lilliard to mark its 450th anniversary.

Beyond this, there are no other indicators of the cultural impact of the battle, but this should not be taken as an indication that the cultural impact of the battle was slight. Certainly in the Borders, the battle had a resonance as a

Inventory of Historic Battlefields

rare occasion that English raiders were defeated and that death and destruction was on the other side.

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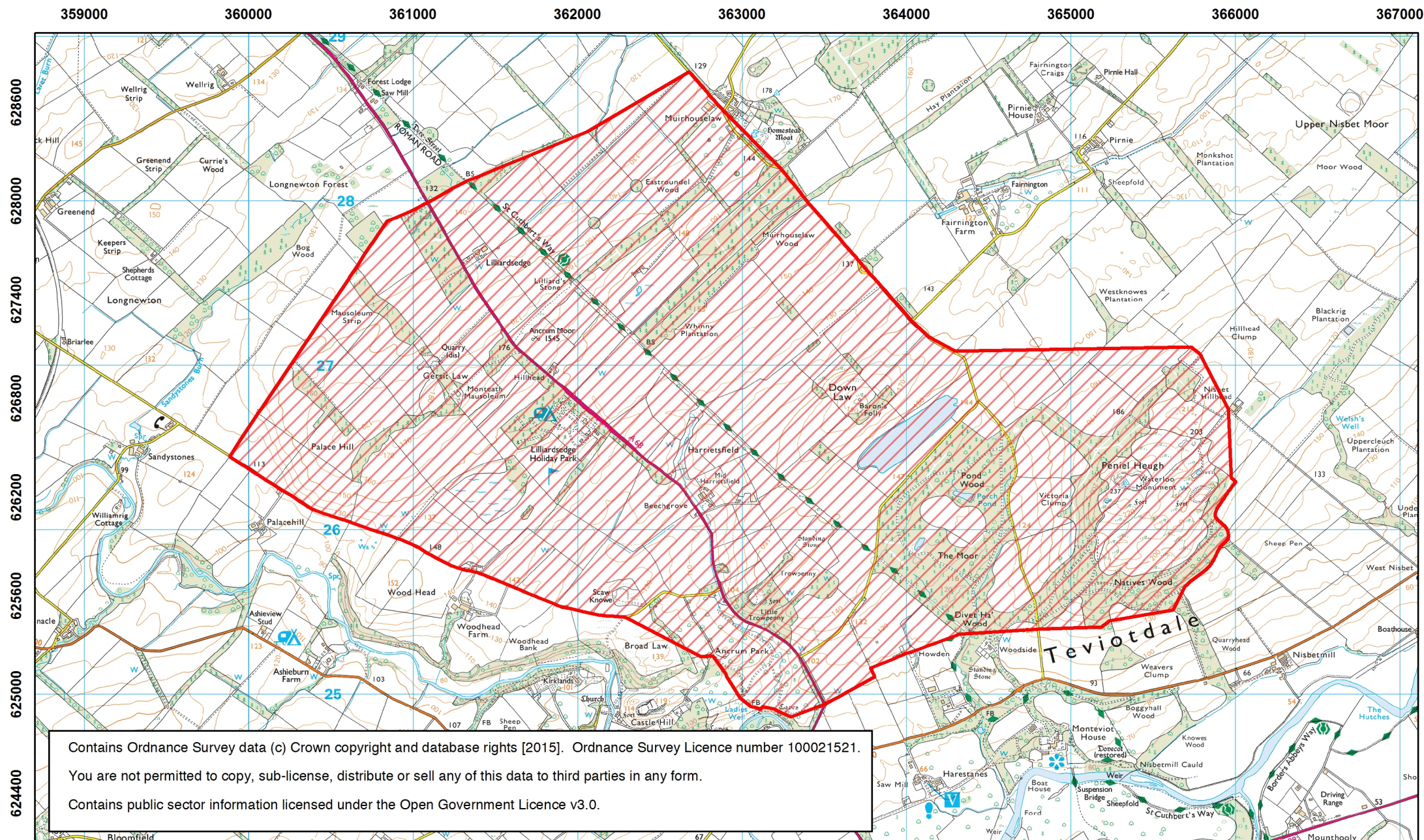
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The Inventory of Historic Battlefields - Boundary

Ancrum Moor

27 February 1545

Local Authority: Scottish Borders



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