

The Inventory of Historic Battlefields

The Battle of Glenlivet

Designation Record

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.

Contents

Name	Date of Addition to Inventory
Alternative Name(s)	Date of Last Update
Date of Battle	Overview and Statement of
Local Authority	Significance
NGR Centred	Inventory Boundary

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GLENLIVET

Alternative Names: Balrinnies; Glen Livet; Glenlivit

3 October 1594

Local Authority: Moray

NGR centred: NJ 240 290

Date of Addition to Inventory: 14 December 2012

Date of last update: 27 January 2016

Overview and Statement of Significance

The Battle of Glenlivet is significant as an example of the ongoing struggles within Scotland between Presbyterians and Catholics, which colours much of Scotland's history after the Reformation, and the relentless efforts of the kirk to eliminate the Catholic faith from the country. It also highlights in microcosm the complex nature of the relationships between Catholic and Protestant powers across Europe at this time, and the labyrinthine political manoeuvrings which occurred as a result. It is also significant as the first battle in the Highlands of Scotland where artillery appears to have played a part in the action, and archaeological evidence of this may well survive on the battlefield.

The Battle of Glenlivet (deriving from the Gaelic - Glen [*glean*] - a deep narrow mountain valley of the slippery smooth place [*liobhaite*]) was considered at the time to be a religious battle between the Catholic forces of George Gordon, 1st Marquess of Huntly, and Frances Hay, 9th Earl of Erroll, and the Protestant army of Archibald Campbell, 7th Earl of Argyll. Following a protracted period of intrigue, during which time Huntly was, on several occasions, implicated in plotting with the Catholic Spanish against James VI, the Earls of Argyll and Atholl were commissioned with the Lieutenancy of the North to deal with traitorous Jesuits returned from abroad accompanied with strangers and supplied with money to 'stir up public weare'.

This programme of suppression escalated with a punitive campaign, led by Argyll, against Huntly and other rebel lords and clan allies. The two sides encountered one another high on a hillside near Ben Rinnes, where Huntly had effectively laid an ambush for Argyll as he climbed the hill. In the ensuing battle Huntly used his horse to great effect in the confined space of a pass and entirely routed Argyll's troops. According to one tradition a weeping Argyll was led from the field. Rather than risk going into battle against the king Huntly threw himself on the king's mercy and went into temporary exile. He was a consummate survivor, however, and it was not long before he was back in the country and in the king's favour.

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

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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 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 Glenlivet is defined on the accompanying map and includes the following areas:

- The north-facing slope of the massif on the upper part of which the battle site is located. This area is likely to accommodate the route taken by Argyll up to the ridge where the battle was fought and also accommodates his line of retreat as he departed along the same route.
- The south-facing slope of the massif which includes the route presumed to have been taken by Huntly on his advance to contact, though it is possible that he ascended the slope from the north but in advance of Argyll. In any case it is likely that his force was concealed on this slope as Argyll climbed the other side.
- The eastern and western boundaries encompass a sufficient area to permit the manoeuvre and deployment of both armies before, during and after the battle.

The Inventory of Historic Battlefields - Boundary

Glenlivet

3 October 1594

Local Authority: Moray

321000

322000

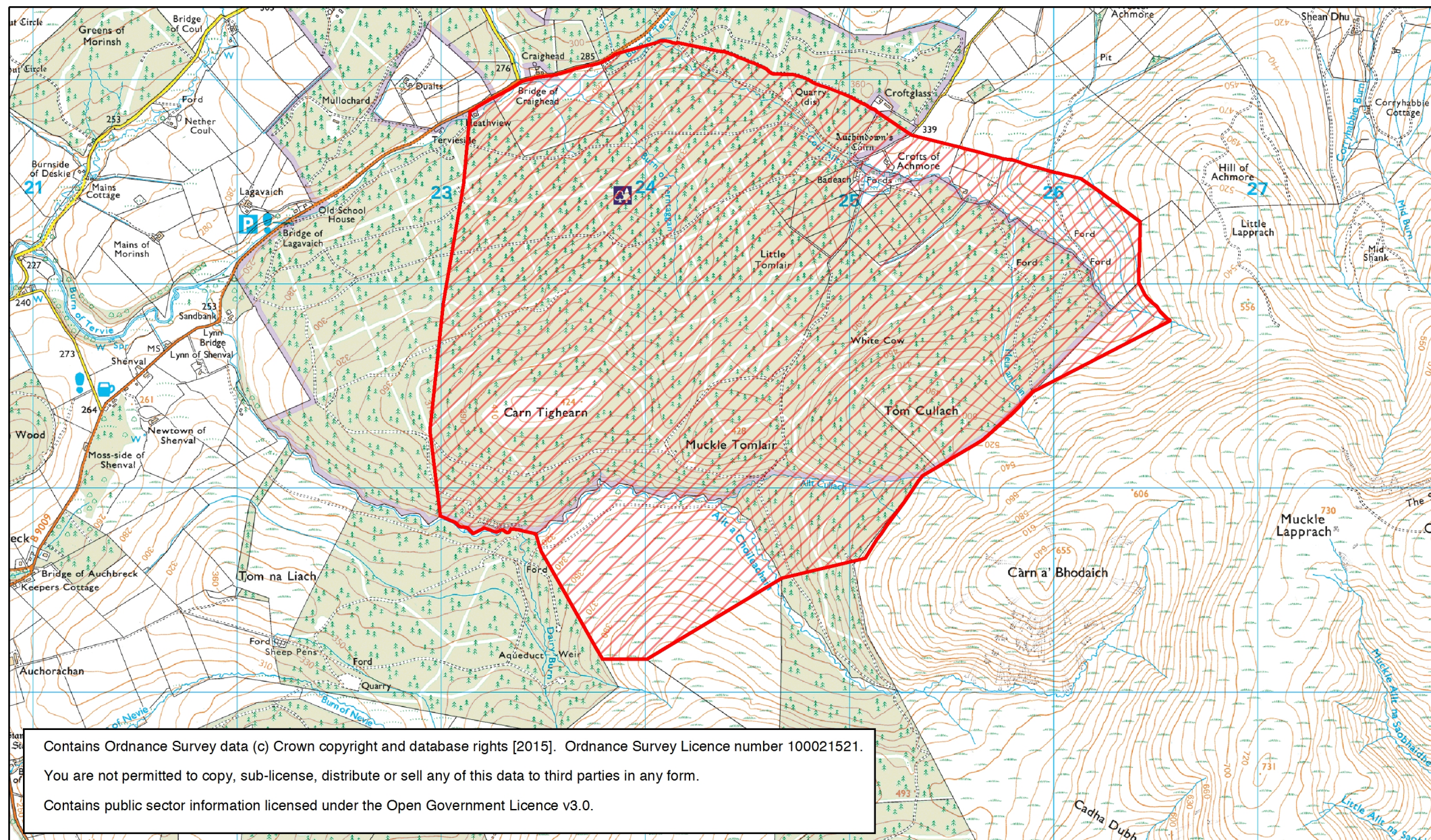
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Inventory of Historic Battlefields boundary

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