

# **The Inventory of Historic Battlefields**

## **The Battle of Langside**

### **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.

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# Inventory of Historic Battlefields

## LANGSIDE

Alternative Names:

13 May 1568

Local Authority: Glasgow City

NGR centred: NS 581 615

Date of Addition to Inventory: 14 December 2012

Date of last update: N/A

## Overview and Statement of Significance

The Battle of Langside is significant as the final act of Mary, Queen of Scots, before her flight to England, imprisonment and death. It ends Mary's hopes of reclaiming the throne of Scotland and secures her son, James VI, his position as King, although in reality he remained under the control of the Regent and the situation remained unstable for many more years.

The Battle of Langside, on the south side of modern Glasgow, was fought on 13 May 1568 between the forces of Mary, Queen of Scots, and those of the Earl of Moray, her half-brother, who since her forced abdication on 24 July 1567 had been Regent of Scotland. Mary's army was commanded by the Earl of Argyll, and was en route from Hamilton to Dumbarton. Moray marched out of Glasgow to intercept them and won a decisive victory, resulting in the end of Mary's attempts to retake the throne. She fled to England, imprisonment, and ultimately execution.

## 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 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 Langside is defined on the accompanying map and includes the following areas:

- The area of Queen's Park, which is the largest expanse of open ground associated with the battle. It is the likely location of at least part of Moray's line.

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- The area to the north of Queen's Park, accommodating Moray's likely route to the battlefield.
- The area to the south of Queens Park, where the village of Langside and its associated gardens were situated.
- Clincart Hill and the area around Cathcart, to the east where Mary's army was positioned. The location at the junction of Langside Avenue and Battlefield Road is marked by the 1887 Langside Battlefield memorial.
- The area to the south, taking in Court Knowe, where Mary herself was taken to watch the battle. The site of this is marked by a memorial located in the small park to the east of the site of Cathcart Castle.

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## **Historical Background to the Battle**

Moray's forces managed to reach the village of Langside ahead of Mary's and arrayed for battle on Langside Hill and in the village itself. Meanwhile, Mary withdrew to nearby Court Hill to observe, leaving Argyll to command the army, even though he was ill.

Mary's forces appear to have underestimated both the strength of Moray's army, and the advantage of his position, when they began their attack. The battle began with an exchange of artillery before some of Argyll's force began an assault on Moray's right wing with both infantry and cavalry, in an attempt to gain control of the village. Despite initial success, Argyll's cavalry were forced to withdraw, leaving the infantry engaged in the fighting without cavalry support. Their fate was sealed when William Kirkcaldy of Grange led reinforcements from the left wing to attack the flank of Argyll's infantry, beginning a rout which may have lasted for up to two hours, and which told Mary her cause was lost.

## **Events & Participants**

Mary, Queen of Scots was a Catholic and the wife of Francis II of France until his death in December 1560. The Protestant Reformation of 1559-60 in Scotland resulted in the rejection of French influence in Scotland, the blame for which had been laid at the door of the Queen's mother, Mary of Guise. The Protestant success, assisted by an English force sent by Elizabeth I, resulted in the end of the siege of Leith and the signing of the Treaty of Edinburgh in July 1560, following the death of Mary of Guise on 11 June. As a result of the treaty all French troops in Scotland returned to France and their fortifications, including the walls of Leith, were slighted. With French influence removed, the stage was set for Mary to return as Queen of Scots in 1561. Her reign was not a happy or stable one and her eventual execution at the hands of Elizabeth I remains a potent symbol of England's perceived ill treatment of her northern neighbour.

James Stewart, half brother of Mary and first Earl of Moray, was an illegitimate son of James V. He was the regent of his nephew, James VI, from 1567 until he was assassinated in 1570. Prior to his regency, which came about due to the forced abdication of Mary, he had earned a reputation as someone who was prepared to take up arms against her, which he did in response to her marriage to Darnley in 1565. The result was the Chaseabout raid, in which both factions pursued one another without actually coming to blows. Support for Moray fell away and after being declared an outlaw he fled to England. His appointment as regent was to set him on course to a perhaps long overdue military encounter with the Queen at Langside.

A number of individuals are particularly mentioned in the records of the battle. On Moray's side these include Sir William Kirkcaldy of Grange, who clearly played a key role in the victory, and Andrew, the laird of the Macfarlanes, who had apparently been condemned to death for a crime only weeks earlier, but

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pardoned at the urging of the regent's wife. On Mary's side, Lord Herries, who led her cavalry, is also singled out.

### **Battlefield Landscape**

At the time of the battle Langside was a village in a rural location well outside the limits of Glasgow. This rural aspect was removed over time as the modern city expanded, and by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, tenements had been built on much of the area. Open ground does survive, notably in the Queen's Park, which includes the hill on which the centre and left flank of Moray's army was positioned.

### **Archaeological and Physical Remains and Potential**

Scott (1885) reported that when a large trench was dug for drainage in the 1830s, leading from the village at Langside to the low ground where the Board School stood in 1885, a sword and some broken spearheads were recovered, though in a very poor state of preservation. Scott attributed the absence of any relics to the clearing of the battlefield of valuable weapons and metals. This is a feasible explanation, as removal of such items was a common practice in the aftermath of a battle. However, smaller objects such as lead balls and possibly iron cannon balls fired in the course of the battle may still survive in places.

Scott also mentions a rumour that the dead from Langside are buried in the marshland that would later become the Queen's Park boating pond on Pollokshaws Road.

Much of the area of Queen's Park was not developed at any point subsequent to the battle. As this was the location of the left of Moray's army and some combat took place in the general location, it should be presumed that survival of artefacts associated with the battle should be greater here.

### **Cultural Association**

This area of Glasgow is now known as 'Battlefield' and the 'Bus'-an'-aik' road is now 'Battlefield Road'. A number of local streets have names linked to the battle e.g. Moray Place, Regent Park Square, Queen Mary Avenue, Grange Road, Lochleven Road and so on.

### **Select Bibliography**

Black C.S. 1936. *Scottish Battles* pp 128-130

Buchanan, G.1843. *Rerum Scoticanum Historia. History of Scotland*. Fisher, Son & Co., London and Paris, pp. 464-468.

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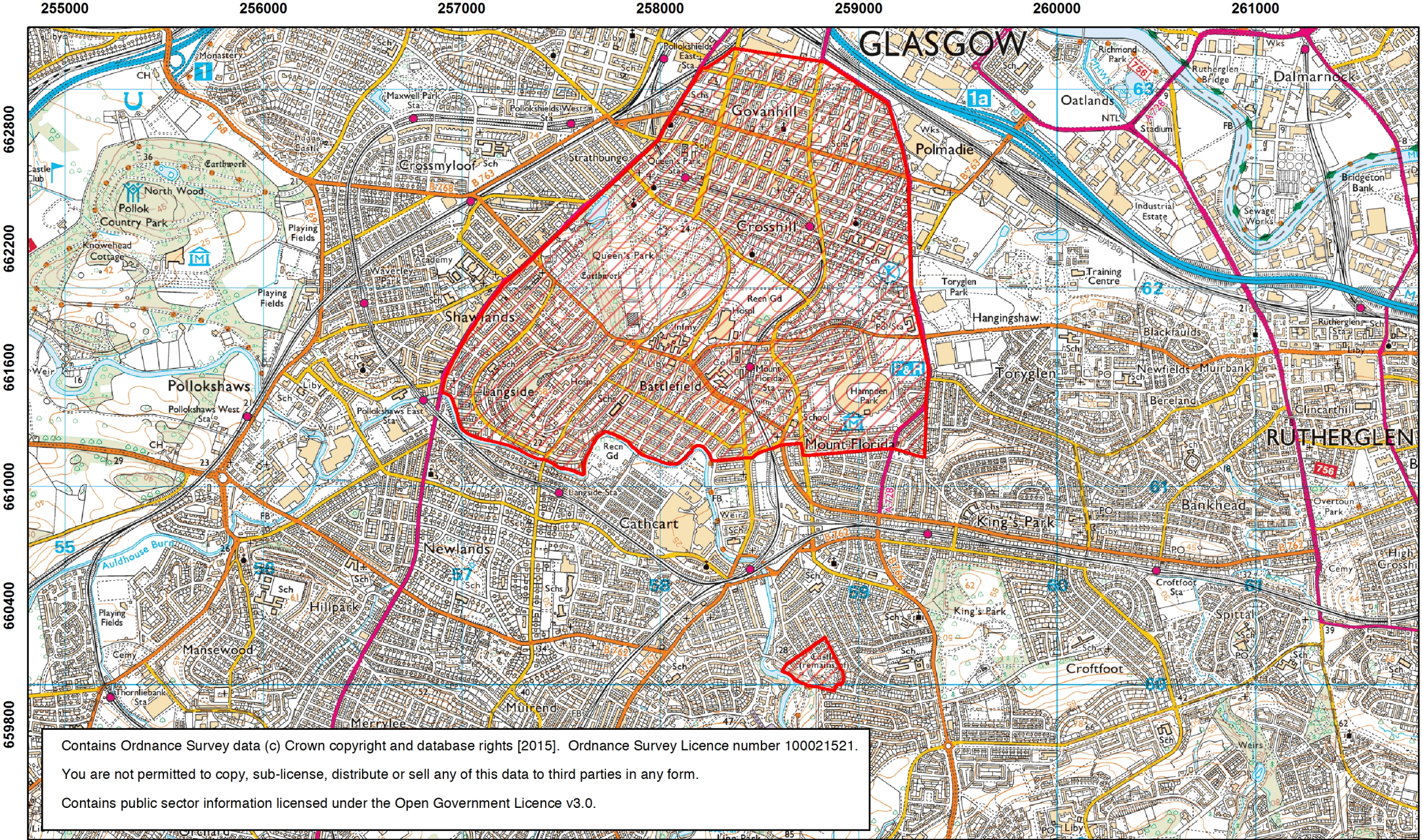
Scott, A.M. 1885. *The Battle of Langside, MDLXVIII*. Hugh Hopkins, Glasgow.

# The Inventory of Historic Battlefields - Boundary

Langside

13 May 1568

Local Authority: Glasgow City



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