

The Inventory of Historic Battlefields

The Battle of Philiphaugh

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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PHILIPHAUGH

Alternative Names: None

13 September 1645

Local Authority: Scottish Borders

NGR centred: NT 444 283

Date of Addition to Inventory: 21 March 2011

Date of last update: 14 December 2012

Overview and Statement of Significance

Philiphaugh is significant as it is the final battle of the Marquis of Montrose's Royalist campaign in 1644 and 1645, and was the only defeat he suffered during it. Philiphaugh effectively destroys Montrose's army and essentially ends any organised Royalist ambitions north of the border.

Philiphaugh was a major defeat for the Scottish Royalist army in the Wars of the Three Kingdoms and signalled the end of the Marquis of Montrose's campaign in Scotland. Montrose had raised the royal standard in Scotland in 1644, in an attempt to secure the country for the king by force of arms. He had won a string of six victories and had crippled the ability of the Covenanters (Scottish Presbyterians opposed to interference by the Stuart Kings in the affairs of the Church of Scotland) to counter him. However, by September his attempts to raise sufficient Lowland forces, or maintain the numbers of his existing troops to sustain his campaign, had failed.

After the crushing defeat at Kilsyth (15 August 1645) no effective Covenanter army remained in Scotland. Consequently, thousands of experienced troops were recalled by the Scottish Government from England and marched north to meet Montrose's depleted Royalists troops positioned in the Borders. The ill-prepared and out numbered Royalists were quickly defeated by the Government troops at Philiphaugh and the captured soldiers, their families and servants were swiftly executed within a short distance of the battlefield. The Royalist defeat signalled the end of Montrose's campaign in Scotland and effectively marked the end of the Civil War in Scotland. The victory of the Covenanters was secured the following year with the surrender of King Charles to a Covenanter army in England.

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

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

- The modern A708 and lands to the north and south from the outskirts of Selkirk to Philiphaugh. The approach route of the Covenanters army and their advance on to the Royalist camp located in woodland beyond Philiphaugh.
- The area of enclosures at Philiphaugh as shown on Roy's 18th century map. Primary sources indicate that the main battle took place within enclosed ground on the haugh.
- Military findspots including Slain Men's Lea where burials were discovered in the 19th century and find-spots including silver plate, coins and bullets located throughout the defined area.
- Harewood Glen to Newark Castle. The probable route westward of the rout. Secondary sources indicate that the camp followers were taken to the castle prior to being slaughtered at Slain Men's Lea.
- The Covenanters Monument and earthworks at Harehead Wood. The Ballad of Philiphaugh states that the battle ended at Harehead Wood. The monument was erected in the woods in 1848 overlying an earthwork traditionally associated with the battle.
- The area to the south of the Ettrick Water. The probable route of the flank attack by the Covenanters.
- The well preserved landscape of the battleground including the riverside land on the northern banks of the Ettrick Water, the route of the Royalist rout to the west and the hill slopes to the north.

Historical Background to the Battle

At Philiphaugh, Montrose's army was at an even greater disadvantage of numbers than in the other battles of the campaign. With probably less than 2,000 troops, he was heavily outnumbered by the Covenanter army of at least 4,000, under the command of David Leslie. Furthermore, he had little idea of the approaching threat. On the night before the battle, he had his officers billeted in Selkirk, while the body of the army was over a mile away camped in woodland. The alarm was only raised when Leslie was less than 2 miles from Selkirk.

It appears that on the battlefield Montrose, as always, made good use of the opportunities offered by the terrain. However, his army was completely unprepared for the Government attack and many of his troops seem never to have been drawn up or engaged. His forces made good use of ditches and dykes to counter the massive superiority of the Covenanters in cavalry, but the advantage of ground was insufficient to enable them to hold off the

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sustained attack of Leslie's experienced troops. Leslie's cavalry came across the haugh, the flat ground beside the river, and assaulted the right wing of the Royalists. They were driven back twice before the Royalist infantry advanced from their defensive position, but they were quickly driven back in turn. The Royalist cavalry tried a counter-charge, but they were unable to reach the Government cavalry and instead broke through the rearguard and left the infantry to their fate. There are accounts of Montrose trying to break through to assist the beleaguered Irish regiment, but was unable to do so and made his escape. As the right flank was holding firm through the support of the remainder of the Royalist cavalry, Leslie led another cavalry charge on the left flank where there was no cavalry, and quickly broke through. This effectively ended the battle, although the Irish regiment stood and fought to the end. Eventually they surrendered having been offered quarter; however, as they were being marched away, they were all killed. Some of the routed Royalist forces were pursued for several miles, but the main focus was the baggage train which was looted, with the camp followers that were with it being slaughtered. While Montrose had escaped with some of his cavalry intact, his army had ceased to exist and he was never again able to rally any substantial support in Scotland.

Events & Participants

The Battle of Philiphaugh was the end of Royalist hopes in Scotland in the Wars of the Three Kingdoms. Montrose was outnumbered as he always was, and, as so often in the past, had insufficient intelligence of the approach of the Government army. His officers were not with their men, and as Leslie's army approached the Royalists were in some confusion. The battle ended in defeat for Montrose, the first that he had suffered, and it was enough to end the campaign. Montrose escaped the battlefield and carried on guerrilla actions during the winter, but he was unable to gather a new army to continue the campaign. Furthermore, the backbone of his army had always been the Irish O'Cahan's Regiment, and it was destroyed in the battle. Those not killed on the field were taken prisoner and subsequently murdered.

After the success of Kilsyth, Montrose intended to recruit for his army before attempting to complete his military control in Scotland. However, his Highland troops were disaffected when their plundering of Glasgow was heavily punished, and within a few days, many had deserted. Aboyne also left with most of the cavalry when Montrose appointed the Earl of Crawford as commander of the horse, while some 800 were sent north to protect their lands, reducing the army to little more than the 500 Irish troops and a few hundred cavalry. Marching east through the Lowlands, he was unable to raise significant numbers of new recruits. Not only was much of the area strongly Covenanter, the Highland and Irish troops were unwelcome in the region because of the long trail of plundering and disorder that they had wreaked across Scotland over the preceding year.

Montrose marched into the Borders to disrupt the mustering of the Covenanter levies and then, turning south from Kelso to Jedburgh and then west to Selkirk, he camped on 12 September at Philiphaugh. However, he suffered from poor intelligence from his scouts, for he was unaware that on 6

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September Sir David Leslie had marched north from England with a large army. On 11 September, Leslie had rendezvoused with Lothian forces at Gladsmuir to the west of Haddington. Then, on hearing the small size of Montrose's army, he marched south to engage the Royalists while they were at their weakest, approaching Selkirk on the night of 12 September.

James Graham was the fifth Earl of Montrose and the first Marquis of Montrose. He was the chief of Clan Graham. Montrose had been a supporter and signatory of the National Covenant in 1638, but had then become a Royalist, although he was driven by motives other than a desire to impose the Divine Right of Kings upon Scotland. He and Archibald Campbell, the eighth Earl of Argyll, were bitter rivals, and Montrose believed that the Covenant had become nothing more than a vehicle for Argyll's ambition. Always a moderate among the Covenanters, Montrose considered that the agreement in 1641 with Charles that had removed episcopacy from Scotland had fulfilled the demands of the Covenant and that to continue in opposition to him would be breaking that agreement. Following the signing of the Solemn League and Covenant in September 1643, Montrose presented himself to Charles I service at his headquarters in Oxford. On behalf of the King, he then fought a campaign intended to draw Covenanter forces away from supporting the Parliamentarians in England, and in this it was a success. Montrose fought a series of seven battles against Covenanter armies across the Highlands in 1644 and 1645, beginning with Tippermuir and ending at Philiphaugh, where he suffered his only defeat. He attempted to do the same on behalf of Charles II in 1650, but on this occasion fought only a single battle at Carbisdale. After his defeat there, he was captured and brought to Edinburgh for trial. On 21 May 1650, he was hanged and then beheaded. His head was fixed to a spike on Edinburgh's Tollbooth, his body quartered, and his limbs were displayed in Stirling, Glasgow, Perth and Aberdeen. Following the Restoration of Charles II as king in 1660, Montrose's remains were collected together once more and were interred in the High Kirk of St Giles in Edinburgh in May 1661.

Manus O'Cahan was the colonel of the Irish regiment that fought in all of Montrose's battles and which was the backbone of all his victories. He was a cousin of Mac Colla, and came over from Ireland with him. He and his regiment were sent to Scotland to ease pressure on the Irish Confederacy, who were fighting Scottish Covenanters and English Parliamentarians in Ireland. As Mac Colla had a recruiting role for the Royalist cause throughout 1644-5, he was occasionally absent in the west seeking fresh troops, but O'Cahan remained with Montrose throughout and was with Montrose for the Battle of Philiphaugh. He was captured after the defeat, his men were executed and he was taken to Edinburgh where he was hanged without trial. He was responsible for the invention of the Highland charge along with Mac Colla, although it is Mac Colla who is generally given sole credit.

Major-General David Leslie, born in 1601, was a very capable and experienced commander who began his military career fighting for Gustavus Adolphus in the Thirty Years War, where he rose to the rank of Colonel. After his return to Scotland in 1640, he was second in command as Major-General of the Scottish armies that were sent to help the English Parliamentarians in 1644; it was the despatch of Leslie and his troops that acted as the spark for Montrose's raising of the Royal Standard in Scotland. He was recalled to

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Scotland in 1645 to deal with Montrose, which he achieved in a single battle at Philiphaugh, before returning to the war in England in 1646. Later that year, it was Leslie who received Charles I surrender at Newark. He returned to Scotland in 1647, where he helped Argyll against Alasdair Mac Colla, Montrose's former ally, finally forcing Mac Colla to withdraw to Ireland. With the Scot's support for Charles II in 1650 after his father's execution, Leslie again found himself in command of the Scottish army against his former ally Oliver Cromwell. He successfully frustrated Cromwell throughout the summer of 1650 until he finally faced him in battle at Dunbar, where Cromwell inflicted a crushing defeat on the Scots force. Leslie opposed Charles II decision to invade England in 1651, and played little part in the Battle of Worcester, where the Scottish army was again defeated, and Leslie was captured and imprisoned in the Tower of London until the Restoration in 1660. In 1661, in recognition of his earlier service to the Royalist cause, Charles II made Leslie the first Baron Newark. Leslie finally died in 1682.

Battlefield Landscape

The general position of the battlefield is well established as the low lying ground beside the river to the south west of Selkirk called Philiphaugh. However, little work has been undertaken to pinpoint the location of the action and the bloody aftermath of the battle more precisely.

Primary sources make it clear that the Covenanters advanced towards the battlefield from the north-east, along the line of the main road crossing the Linglie Burn. The majority of this approach is now under housing, but the area of the Royalist overnight camp was almost certainly further to the west within the agricultural hinterland of Selkirk. Physical elements of this encampment may still survive.

The probable location of battlefield, immediately to the west of Philiphaugh Farm, survives as enclosed farmland. A group of isolated enclosures shown on Roy's mid 18th century map at Philiphaugh Farm may represent the hedges and dykes that the Royalists used for cover. There has been a lot of change in this part of the landscape with the construction of Philiphaugh House and parklands and any surface traces of the enclosures are no longer visible on the ground. However, linear features are present running across the haugh to the river. The purpose and date of these earthworks is unknown but it is possible that they represent the large ditch that acted as both cover and hindrance for the Royalists. There is high potential to locate the enclosures and the provenance of the linear features through archaeological fieldwork.

To the north-west of the battlefield is an area known as Slain Men's Lea, traditionally the site where the Irish soldiers and the camp followers were killed. Human remains were recorded at this location during the construction of a school in 1810. The potential for further burials to be located within the defined battlefield area is high due to the level of casualties; several hundred Royalists were reportedly killed during the battle and its aftermath.

Both primary and secondary sources suggest that the direction of the rout was to the north-west, terminating at Newark Castle. This short distance from the

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battlefield suggests that further burials may be located within the western half of the Inventory boundary.

The battle was fought across the narrow low lying tract of riverside land on the northern banks of the Ettrick Water, overlooked to the north by the Linglie hills and the river to the south. The majority of the plain appears to have been open land and meadow at the time of the battle, with only the lands surrounding Philiphaugh Farm enclosed. Although the landscape has been altered through field enclosure, light industry and the construction of sports grounds on the north-east, the overall character of the battlefield is largely intact and well preserved as open countryside.

The topography of the flat open plain was excellent ground for the Covenanter cavalry to attack Montrose's infantry deployed within the field enclosures. This landscape is very well preserved and the spatial relationship between the plain, the river to the south and the higher ground to the north and west remains clear. The route of the Royalist rout across the southern slopes of Harehead Hill north-west to Newark Castle can still be traced on the ground and key views from the battlefield to Ettrick Water to the south and Selkirk to the west survive intact.

Archaeological and Physical Remains and Potential

The majority of the area of the battle appears to have remained fairly undisturbed and the potential for surviving in-situ evidence associated with the battle is high. Metal detecting on the haugh and the adjacent higher ground has recovered quantities of lead bullets. The cavalry action may be expected to be represented by concentrations of pistol and carbine bullets, while the infantry versus dragoon/infantry should be marked by mainly musket balls. Where the cavalry were involved in the assaults on the infantry within the enclosures a mixture of all ammunition may be present.

There are no unequivocal archaeological remains from the battle. Human remains were recorded in 1810 during the construction of a school at Slain Men's Lea (on the western edge of the defined area), which were said to be the remains of some of Montrose's army.

A low linear earthwork was recorded within Philiphaugh Park on the Ordnance survey map of 1863. It consisted of a bank about 6 m wide with a parallel ditch along its west side, running from the bank of the Yarrow northward across the valley bottom. It has been tentatively identified by some as the earthwork thrown up by the Royalists prior to the battle. These earthworks were apparently far more extensive than those which survive today, but were largely levelled by ploughing in the mid 19th century (Robson 1897). Their identification as Royalist earthworks seems unlikely, not only because it is more than a mile from the Philiphaugh enclosures, but also because the earthwork formerly extended on the other side of the Yarrow.

Another antiquarian account states that in the late 19th century 'in a hollow piece of ground near Harehead Wood, in Leslie's Field a quantity of silver plate' was found. Silver coins of the period were also found in this period on a haugh of the Tinnis (Tinnis Farm lies upstream along the Yarrow) and other

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stray silver coins have been found within the defined area. The silver coins reported as having been found at Tinnis were apparently given to Sir Walter Scott.

A flintlock gun, said to be associated with the battle, was located in Philiphaugh House in the late 19th century. Today, artefacts from the battlefield are displayed in Haliwell House Museum, Selkirk.

Cultural Association

The battle is not particularly well known today. There is one surviving ballad, the *Philiphaugh Ballad* which records the action on the battlefield and may date to pre-1700. There is on-site interpretation at the western end of the battlefield, provided by the Estate, and a monument commemorating the Covenanters within the parkland.

The battlefield is surrounded by place-names associated with the action, including Battlepark Plantation, General's Haugh and Montrose Plantation, though these are likely to be relatively modern as the majority relate to plantations rather than more durable landscape features; the exception to this is the longstanding place-name Slain Men's Lea, which traditionally marks the location of a massacre of prisoners after the battle.

Select Bibliography

Elliot, W. F. 1906 *The Trustworthiness of Border Ballads*. William Blackwood, Edinburgh.

Reid, S. 1990 *The Campaigns of Montrose: a military history of the Civil War in Scotland 1639 to 1646*. Mercat Press, Edinburgh.

The Inventory of Historic Battlefields - Boundary

Philiphaugh

13 September 1645

Local Authority: Scottish Borders

