

The Inventory of Historic Battlefields

The Battle of Pinkie

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

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Battle of Pinkie

BTL15

Date of Battle: 10 September 1547

Category: N/A

Date Added: 21/03/2011

Last Date Amended: 14/12/2012

Local Authority: East Lothian

National Grid Reference

NGR: NT 36032 71425

Coordinates: 336032, 671425

Overview and Statement of Significance

The Battle of Pinkie is significant as probably the single largest battle fought within Scotland and for the use on a British battlefield of some of the major military innovations of the 16th century. It is also the final major battle fought between the separate Kingdoms of Scotland and England prior to the Union of the Crowns in 1603. It also leads directly to Mary, Queen of Scots flight to France and the subsequent turmoil within Scotland after Mary's later return.

The Battle of Pinkie came as the culmination of Henry VIII's campaign, known as the Rough Wooing, with the objective of forcing the Scots acceptance of a marriage alliance between his son Edward and the infant Mary, Queen of Scots. After Henry's death in January 1547 the Regent, the Duke of Somerset, decided that an invasion was the only way to secure the marriage. In September 1547 he marched his army north along the east coast to Scotland.

The battle was a dramatic defeat for the Scots, causing the virtual destruction of their army. Despite Scotland's heavy losses, the English were unable to achieve their war aims; the marriage did not take place and this led to Mary's swift departure for France and her marriage to the Dauphin, thereby renewing the Auld Alliance.

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 Pinkie is defined on the accompanying map and

includes the following areas:

Land to the west of Esk, now housing estates on the south-west of Musselburgh (Whitehill, Stoneyhill, Stoneybank and Eskview). The probable location of the Scottish camp.

The area around Drummohr and Morrison's Haven. The location of the English camp before the battle.

The slopes and summit of Carberry Hill. The probable location of the cavalry skirmish the day before the battle.

The River Esk from Musselburgh to Whitecraig and lands to the east including the old bridge, Inveresk, the Carberry Road (A6124), Wallyford and Howe Mire. The location of the advance of the Scottish troops over the Esk and eastward.

The position of the English troop's deployment on the slopes of Falside Hill.

Landscape features involved in the rout and the aftermath of the battle, notably the route westward of the rout over the old bridge in Musselburgh, St Michael's churchyard where some of the victims of the rout were buried and Falside castle, which was burnt after the battle by the English.

The well preserved landscape characteristics of the battlefield including the views out and relationship between the lower slopes of Falside Hill, the Howe Mire, lands to the west of the Esk and Inveresk Churchyard.

Historical Background

The Scottish army of 22-23,000 men under the Earl of Arran was camped at Musselburgh, controlling the bridge across the Esk and protected by the steep river bank and an area of marshland to the south. The English army of 15-19,000 men under the Duke of Somerset had advanced up the east coast, keeping close to the coast to maintain contact with the navy. On the night before the battle, the English camped just to the west of Prestonpans.

The initial fighting began on 9 September with a confrontation between cavalry units at Falside Hill, where the Scottish cavalry were heavily mauled and driven west for three miles. As a result, a large part of the Scottish cavalry was not available to Arran the following day when the main battle took place. In the meantime, having gained the high ground above Musselburgh, Somerset established artillery on the slopes.

On the morning of 10 September, the English moved towards Inveresk Church (St Michael's) but discovered that the Scots had broken camp and were already taking control of the church. This meant that the Scots had abandoned a strong defensive position and were now exposed. Indeed, the Scots now continued to advance rapidly, moving faster than the English expected. There are divergent opinions on why the Scots were advancing; it may have been to try to take the high ground, while it has also been suggested that it was an attempt to avoid the threat of artillery on the slopes by coming to close combat before the guns could be brought into use. Whatever the case, Somerset sent in his cavalry to slow down the advance. The Scottish schiltrons worked effectively against the English cavalry and drove them off with what were described as heavy losses. However, the momentum of the Scottish advance had been lost, and they were now static and in open ground. They were within range of the

artillery on the slopes and of the naval guns; the ships had already inflicted casualties on Arran's rearguard as they had advanced through Musselburgh. The Highland archers in the rearguard had sustained losses from the naval bombardment and some had broken and run as a result.

Nevertheless, the Scottish position still seemed reasonably strong. There was a head-dyke in front of the Earl of Angus's troops, with Angus the commander of the Scottish vanguard, protecting against cavalry charges, while the remaining Scots army had a turf wall on the right flank and possibly the Pinkie Burn on the left, both of which guarded against flanking movements by cavalry. However, they were now facing archers, arquebusiers and artillery; they were also in view of the English ships and in range of their guns. While the Scots had the same types of ordnance, they had far fewer and were unable to respond in kind to the fire that now poured in on them from front and rear. The Scots could not stay where they were under such intense bombardment, and there seems to have been an attempt to pull back and move out of range. At this point, the Scottish discipline that had held so well against the cavalry began to deteriorate and the retreat quickly collapsed into a rout. As the Scottish schiltrons collapsed and men dropped their equipment to run for Musselburgh and Edinburgh, the English cavalry came back into the fray and cut men down for an extended distance. Some sources claim that the pursuit was all the way to the walls of Edinburgh, but even more conservative accounts suggest a very extensive killing zone towards the city.

As a final part of the fighting, the small Scottish garrison that had held out in Falside Castle was all killed when the English set the tower on fire. As the time was now well into the afternoon, the English made camp a little to the east of Inveresk Church; the next morning they collected Scottish artillery and equipment and buried their dead.

Events & Participants

There had been a long history of English claims to suzerainty over Scotland before Edward I had taken feudal overlordship over the kingdom. Henry VIII considered that he still retained that claim. He also considered Scotland an active threat due to its links with France at a time when England was involved in constant conflict with the French. Henry's approach to the problem was the Rough Wooing.

The most significant participants in the battle were the respective commanders, Somerset and Arran. Arran was Regent of Scotland and next in line to the Scottish throne after Mary Queen of Scots. He had been a Protestant and one of the negotiators of the original marriage agreement in 1543, but had converted to Catholicism and was pro-French. He had been one of the commanders of the Scottish army that had won the Battle of Ancrum Moor in 1545. In the aftermath of the Battle of Pinkie, he was instrumental in ensuring the escape of Mary to France, preventing the marriage from taking place. In 1554 Arran resigned the Regency to Mary of Guise, the mother of Mary Queen of Scots. Initially allied with her, he changed allegiance to the Protestant Lords of the Congregation and unsuccessfully opposed the decision to have the young queen married to the French Dauphin (later Francis II of France).

The Scottish vanguard was commanded by the Earl of Angus, the Red Douglas. 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.

Also present within the Scottish army was George Gordon, the Earl of Huntly. He was Lord Chancellor of Scotland in succession to the murdered Cardinal Beaton. He was captured during the fighting at Pinkie, but was able to escape and head for France with Mary of Guise in 1550. He later turned against Mary Queen of Scots when she took the earldom of Moray from him, and later rose in rebellion against her. He died in captivity after being defeated in the Battle of Corrichie in 1562.

Edward Seymour was the Earl of Hertford, the Duke of Somerset and the Lord Protector of England during the minority of Edward VI. He was the brother of Jane Seymour, the third of Henry VIII's wives; she died from complications in childbirth, which was the reason that Somerset was able to survive the end of that marriage. He had been Warden of the Scottish Marches under Henry, and in this capacity had pursued the Rough Wooing vigorously on Henry's behalf. Somerset was also a leader of what was seen as the Reform group that led the Protestant cause in England. He was a talented military commander with a strong record of military victories; in addition to his successes in Scotland, he led the defence of Boulogne-sur-mer in 1546. However, he was less able as a politician and all of his schemes came to an unsuccessful end. He was not able to bring Scots to the English Protestant cause despite the growing strength of Protestantism in Scotland, and his policy of occupation proved to be an expensive failure because of supply difficulties. In 1549, he was stripped of the title of Lord

Protector and was subsequently beheaded in 1552.

Lord William Grey led the English cavalry. He was an experienced soldier with distinguished service in the Italian War in France between 1544 and 1546. He was wounded by a pike thrust during the cavalry charge against the Scottish schiltrons, but survived to lead the establishment of the English base at Haddington, which was to be the focus of a prolonged siege. He survived the death of Somerset and involvement with Northumberland's attempt to put Lady Jane Grey on the throne. He was sent to France to defend the Calais enclave but was unsuccessful and ended with the loss of Calais and his own capture by the French. He was finally prominent in the Siege of Leith in 1560, when he led the English troops that participated in the attempts to drive the French out of Scotland, although his efforts here were generally seen as being a failure.

Lord John Dudley, Earl of Warwick, led the English vanguard at Pinkie. A confidant of both Henry VIII and Somerset, he was popular and considered one of the finest commanders in England. Warwick had been Lord Admiral of the Navy and provided naval support for military action during earlier phases of the Rough Wooing. At the time of Pinkie, he was once again a soldier. After Pinkie, Warwick was one of the most powerful of the nobles that ruled England during Edward VI's minority. He supported Somerset as Lord Protector, but as Somerset proved to be a less than able governor who was focused on expensive military policies, he led the efforts to remove Somerset from power. However, he ensured that no harm came to Somerset, although the latter was eventually executed on trumped up charges. Warwick became Duke of Northumberland and ran England for Edward VI, and led the attempt to have Lady Jane Grey succeed Edward in preference to the Catholic Mary. When this attempt failed, the Earl was charged with treason and beheaded in 1553 in front of a crowd of 10,000.

The battle itself is significant in terms of tactics. It was the first time in Britain that gunpowder weapons proved decisive in the outcome of a battle; it was also the first time that artillery, infantry, cavalry and naval support had combined in an action recognisable in modern terms. While, in these terms Pinkie was comparable to contemporary battles in Europe, the use of naval bombardment as part of the battle was a major innovation; the guns firing from the ships out at sea caused havoc amongst the Scottish rearguard and drove off some of the archers that might have replied to the English fire. Artillery had been present in earlier battles, such as Flodden in 1513, but had never been as effectively employed as it was at Pinkie. The English guns made the Scottish defensive position untenable, ripped great holes in the schiltrons and made it impossible for the Scots to hold position after fending off the cavalry. The standard English medieval tactics of archery and dismounted men-at-arms were replaced by heavy cavalry charging the enemy and pursuing them as they routed, with arquebuses firing into the sides of the schiltrons. As well as being the first time that such a battle had been fought on British soil, it was an early example of such tactics in European terms.

Battlefield Landscape

The landscape of the battlefield was recorded on a series of detailed plans of the phases of the battle which show both the topography of the battlefield and the armies on the move and help identify the location of events across the area.

The Scottish camp is generally shown to lie immediately west of the Esk in the area of Stonyhill; a contemporary English source gives its location as Edminston Edge, possibly the

scarp immediately to the west of the Esk. The bridge to the east of the camp is the 'old bridge' on the map of 1824, a little upstream of the later bridges. The English camp the night before the battle lay on the coast adjacent to Prestonpans at Salt Preston two miles from the Scots. This is the approximate area of modern Drummohr and the Royal Musselburgh Golf Course.

The advance of the Scottish forces on the morning of 10 September was across the Esk by the old bridge on the main road west of Musselburgh and by fording the Esk immediately to the west of Inveresk church. The van and main battle then advanced on the south side and the rearguard on the north side of Inveresk church, then turning and marching south-east. The line of march of the English army was initially immediately west from their camp, perhaps broadly along the course of the later post road, which ran between Musselburgh and Inveresk to the old bridge. When the English saw that the Scots had already taken the high ground of Inveresk, they turned their march south-east towards Falside Hill.

Significant landscape features shown on the plans that indicate the locations of the troops are the slough (a low-lying area of soft waterlogged ground and standing water) immediately in front of the Scottish army and the lane that formed the western boundary of the Scottish deployment. The lane was used by Somerset to reconnoitre the Scottish camp and was where he intended to place his artillery to bombard their camp. The slough may refer to the stream running on the southern boundary dividing Inveresk fields from Carberry immediately west of Crookstone, while the lane may be the Carberry road.

The pursuit and slaughter began shortly beyond where the Scottish forces stood. From here, the Bodleian drawings makes clear the troops fled across the Esk, some south-west through marshland, others west through the Scottish camp, yet others via the Musselburgh bridge and along the coast. In the aftermath the small garrison of Scots located in Falside Castle were attacked by the English and the castle burnt to the ground.

The cavalry skirmish on 9 September was described by the main English source as being on Falside Brae, and this has had an effect in locating the battlefield. However, on the Bodleian drawings it appears to take place on the summit and north-east slope of Carberry Hill. This matches the source's description that recorded just one hill extending to the south-west with Carberry Tower at its foot; this might be explained if the source conflated the two hills into one. If this is the case, then it would push the main fighting further to the south and west than generally thought.

The battle was fought on the open ground to the east of Inveresk, around the Howe Mire. Overall, the general landscape of the battlefield and key features within it have been well preserved so that the events of the battle are still comprehensible. The majority of the main areas of fighting still lie within open fields, though the spread of Inveresk, Musselburgh and Wallyford and the A1 road has encroached on some potential areas of action. The routes of the English army from the lower slopes of Falside Hill and the Scots from Musselburgh and Inveresk to the battlefield can still be traced and understood, and significant landscape features, such as the lane illustrated on contemporary maps and Falside Castle, survive intact.

Important views, such as those looking out to sea from Inveresk Church (where the Scots must have seen the full extent of the English naval force) and from the slopes of Falside and Carberry Hill towards Musselburgh to the north-west, are intact and provide the same outlook

as they would have done in the 16th century.

Archaeological & Physical Remains and Potential

In the mid 19th century, large quantities of human bones, pieces of spears, swords, horseshoes and 'officers' epaulettes' were recovered on the eastern side of Howe Mire. Howe Mire also holds high potential for further remains, and may hold unusual remains, either as waterlogged deposits or as a buried land surface dating to the time of the battle.

To the south of Inveresk, in an area that would have been on the rout, the excavation of a cable trench in 1990 revealed the severely disturbed remains of at least two adult human skeletons. The site had been disturbed by earlier service trenches (NMRS NT37SE 92). No analysis was made of the remains and there was no indication of gender or date. As the battlefield lies in an area rich in prehistoric and later settlement, burial, military and other remains (Bishop 2002) and these disturbed remains were discovered in the near vicinity of cist burials (found in 1865), the skeletons may not relate to the battle at all.

A sewer pipeline was excavated through the battlefield in 2001, which revealed a mix of prehistoric and Roman material, but did not encounter any burials (NT37SE 50); unfortunately, the issue of the battle was not part of this fieldwork programme (Cook 2004).

As there was both a fire-fight around Falside Tower and then the burning of the tower itself, it is to be expected that both bullet scatters will exist in the land immediately surrounding the tower and that stratified deposits may exist from the burning itself. It is also possible that bullet impact scars could also exist on the stonework. The castle is now restored and occupied but still retains the original 15th century tower. The tower is now fully rendered so it is not possible to determine whether the structure retains shot impact scars from hagbutt or artillery fire during the siege.

Material relating to the battle has been recovered through numerous metal detecting surveys. These finds include lead balls, possible case shot, round shot, buttons, buckles and various pieces of horse fittings. A concentration of artefacts has been located to the south-east of Wallyford. A co-ordinated metal detector survey within the context of an archaeological research project will be required to determine if this area was the centre of the battle or one of the flanks.

Although there has been extensive development in parts of the battlefield, the area of the main battle has remained undisturbed and the potential for surviving in-situ evidence is high. Pinkie battlefield is of high importance not only because of the scale of the battle, but also because of the rarity of battlefields of this period in the UK. It has enormous potential to contribute to battlefield studies generally. There is an opportunity to recover evidence of artillery fire: case shot, comprising iron fragments or possibly lead bullets, probably used in the close quarter action; bullet scatters from the use of 'hagbutts'; and arrowheads, this being the only battle in Britain involving the intensive use of both archery and small arms fire. In this way Pinkie might provide a way of 'calibrating' the evidence of archery on earlier battlefields in Britain. It also has a high potential to contribute to our understanding of the nature of artefact scatters from Medieval battles. Other patterns of artefact deposition, of ferrous and non-ferrous artefacts, including those resulting from the stripping of the dead and from losses in the pursuit, should be present.

One of the English officers, William Patten, recorded that the bodies of the Scots were stripped before being disposed. This means that fastenings and other items of personal dress may have been strewn across the ground. As most of the Scottish infantry would have been wearing padded jackets with protective metal plates, the location of these may indicate the main area of the foot-soldiers.

One problem that must be taken into account is the possibility of superimposition of 17th century bullets, particularly from skirmishes in July and September 1650 when Scottish forces were engaged with Cromwell's army, 'upon a hill neer Musleborough' and in Musselburgh itself with a pursuit towards Edinburgh (Cromwelliana 1810, 86-7). However, this problem should be resolvable through detailed calibre analysis. It is also the case that metal detecting in 2004-6 revealed evidence of a Napoleonic era camp in the vicinity.

While some burial of combatants took place in Inveresk churchyard, the vast majority of those killed were probably buried in mass graves on the battlefield with others in a far more scattered fashion across the area of the pursuit, as far as Dalkeith, Edinburgh and Leith. The evidence of the pursuit is to be expected to extend with increasing scarcity almost as far as the Flodden Wall in Edinburgh.

According to Patten, the English camp on the night of 9 September was entrenched, meaning that there is a potential for archaeological features associated with the camp as well as artefact scatters. In contrast, the Scottish camp may yield extensive artefact scatters as it was subject to intensive plundering by the English troops. Unfortunately, there is a possibility that it lies entirely beneath the housing estate of Stoneybank.

The battle is also recorded in a series of contemporary plans which are the earliest and most extensive collection of surviving plans for any battle in Britain. These comprise detailed plans of the various phases of the battle, showing the armies on the move and the topography of the battlefield, and may indicate locations of potential finds related to the battle. They are currently held in the Bodleian Library.

Cultural Association

There is a memorial stone which marks the supposed location of the English camp after the battle in parkland to the east of Inveresk church. There is also a battlefield memorial next to Salter's Road at the junction with the short slip road to Eskfield Cottages, and an annual commemorative ceremony is held here. Recent local interest has led to the formation of the Pinkie Cleugh Battlefield Group within the Musselburgh Conservation Society. There is no on-site interpretation but the Musselburgh Conservation Society has a guided battlefield walk on their website.

In Scotland, the battle is almost culturally invisible, particularly when compared to Bannockburn or Culloden. The only ballad that survives comes from England, called Musselboorowe Ffield, which survives as a fragment.

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Local Authority: East Lothian



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