The Inventory of Historic Battlefields – Battle of Inverkeithing II

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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INVERKEITHING II

Alternative Names: None

20 July 1651

Local Authority: Fife

NGR centred: NT 125 819

Date of Addition to Inventory: 30 November 2011

Date of last update: 14 December 2012

Overview and Statement of Significance

The second battle of Inverkeithing is significant as the final battle within Scotland of the period of destructive conflict within the British Isles known as the Wars of the Three Kingdoms and brings Scotland within the complete control of the Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell.

The proclamation of Charles II as the new king by the Scottish Parliament on 6 February 1649 set England and Scotland on a collision course. Cromwell invaded Scotland in July 1650; after a period of unproductive manoeuvring, Cromwell inflicted a heavy defeat on the Scottish army under David Leslie at Dunbar on 3 September 1650. However, Cromwell was still blocked by Leslie and unable to advance further into Scotland.

Cromwell realised that Fife was the key to outflanking Leslie, and prepared for a sea-borne assault on the Fife coast at North Queensferry. On the night of 16/17 July 1651, Colonel Overton led around 2,000 men to a landing on the north shore of the Forth, possibly at Inverkeithing Bay or Port Laing; by 20 July, the Parliamentarian force numbered around 4,500 men and was dug in on the Ferry Hills looking north towards roughly the same number of Scots at Castland Hill.

On hearing a report of Scottish reinforcements coming from Stirling, the Parliamentarians attacked. After a cavalry action that saw losses on both sides, the Scottish infantry retreated north towards Pitreavie Castle, with the fighting raging all the way there. At Pitreavie, the infantry made a final stand but were overwhelmed by the more experienced Parliamentarians who had the additional advantage of cavalry. The Scots took heavy losses, including many prisoners. This was the last major battle of the Wars of the Three Kingdoms in Scotland, and from 1652 Scotland was wholly under the control of the Protectorate.

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 Inverkeithing II is defined on the accompanying map and includes the following areas:

- The possible landing points for the Parliamentarian beachhead in or near North Queensferry.

- The Ferry Hills where the Parliamentarian camp lay, together with field fortifications.

- Whinny Hill and Castland Hill where the initial Scottish deployment was made.

- The area north of Castland Hill where the fighting retreat took place.

- Pitreavie Castle where the Macleans made their last stand.

- The fields between the railway and the A823 where the last and bloodiest part of the battle took place.

- The land between the two areas has been specifically excluded, as very little action of the fighting retreat appears to have occurred within this area, becoming far more intense as the armies approached Pitreavie Castle to the north.

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Historical Background to the Battle

Colonel Overton's force consisted of 1,600 foot plus four troops of cavalry. The landing took place on the peninsula at Queen's Ferry on the night of 16/17 July, with, according to Cromwell, the loss of only six men. The Scots had a garrison nearby at Burntisland and the alarm was quickly sent to Stirling; Sir John Browne and Major General James Holbourne were despatched with their brigades of Cavalry and infantry.

The two armies drew up facing each other, with the English dug in on the Ferry Hills and the Scots on the lower slopes of Castland Hill, with their right anchored on Whinney Hill and their left on the Hill of Selvege or Muckle Hill, a little to the south of Inverkeithing. Some of the Scots may have been dug in, as the English commander Lambert spoke afterwards of burying some of the Scots dead in their own trenches. Holbourne was reluctant to assault the English position with just one infantry brigade, and Lambert did not intend to move until all his troops had landed. When the cavalry joined Lambert, the outnumbered Holbourne decided to withdraw.

Lambert reported that Holbourne began to wheel as if to march away or take advantage of a steep mountain (Castland Hill). Lambert immediately sent the cavalry forward to engage the Scots rearguard, causing Holbourne to halt and draw up his troops in order of battle. In Lambert's account, the English probably outnumbered the Scots by at least five or six hundred but the Scots had the advantage of the ground, with the English horse on the left being on particularly bad ground, facing a pass lined by musketeers.

Once the deployments had been made, nothing happened for an hour and a half, with each side expecting to be attacked by the other. The trigger for action was a report from Cromwell that Scots reinforcements were marching from Stirling. As the English attacked, Browne on the Scots right led a cavalry charge using the slope and the Scots lancers broke the English cavalry opposite, who were probably inexperienced troopers. However, the English counter-attacked, routing the Scottish cavalry and capturing Browne himself. On the left, the moss troopers were initially successful, but lack of discipline began to tell and they, in turn, were routed.

With the rout of the Scots cavalry the battle was effectively over, with relatively little serious fighting at the initial battle lines. It seems the Scots cavalry either covered the retreat of the infantry, or that Holbourne withdrew the infantry leaving the cavalry to fight on alone. The pursuit of the defeated was protracted and bloody. Holbourne's experienced troops and Gray's regiment both seem to have escaped intact, although it is said that the Pinkerton Burn ran red with blood for three days, but the Highlanders were almost wiped out after a four hour running battle culminating in a stand on the slopes around Pitreavie Castle. Duart and his men turned to fight, the English accounts said that all but thirty-five out of 800 Highlanders were killed, though Balfour records that the Scots lost 800 in total of whom 100 were Duart's men.

The Armies

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According to Cromwell, the initial landing consisted of about 1,400 foot plus some horse and dragoons. These were reinforced by two regiments of horse and two of foot. In the battle, Lambert used two regiments of horse, about 400 of horse and dragoons, and three regiments of foot (Carlyle 1904). Many of the troops in the initial landing were inexperienced garrison troops, but the core of the force were highly experienced veterans from the New Model Army.

Cromwell says the Scots had five regiments of foot and about four or five regiments of horse (Carlyle 1904). Lambert stated that on the Saturday the Scots had about four thousand men, and received a reinforcement of 500 on the Sunday who were probably a Highland regiment under MacLean of Duart. There would also have been men from the garrison at Burntisland under Barclay. Browne's cavalry brigade comprised three regiments, in addition to which he had a small number of cavalry under Brechin who had opposed the initial landing, together with a small force of 'moss-troopers'. The Scottish infantry was made up of Highlanders, local militia from Dunfermline and Inverkeithing, and archers from Perth (Grainger 1997).

Numbers

English: The Parliamentarian army consisted of around 5,000 men in four regiments of infantry and three regiments of cavalry.

Scots: The Scottish army numbered around 4,500 in five regiments of infantry and about four or five regiments of horse. According to a muster of 18 July 1651, Holbourne's infantry brigade numbered 2,152 men excluding officers. The cavalry included 200 'moss-troopers'.

Losses

According to Lambert the English lost 'not above eight men, but divers wounded.'(Reid 2004). Lambert's wife says 'We have lost butt few, but many wounded, most of which was in my husband's regiment of hors' (Akerman 1856).

The casualties on the Scots side were certainly heavy. Most sources agree that about 2,000 were killed and around 1,500 taken prisoner, although various figures are reported for the casualties of the Highland regiments. Cromwell in his letter immediately after the battle reported at least two thousand dead (including some senior officers), and about five or six hundred prisoners taken, including Browne and other senior officers. He amended the number of prisoners to 1500-1600 on the following day (Carlyle 1904). Cornet Baynes and Mrs Campbell also use the figures of 2,000 dead and 1500 prisoners, which were presumably the figures promulgated by Cromwell to the army (Akerman 1856).

Grainger says that Browne and his cavalry were overwhelmed and 800 MacLeans and 700 Buchanans were destroyed where they stood and other foot were killed in the pursuit of six miles that followed. In all 2,000 Scots were killed, 1,400 captured and 1,000 escaped to Stirling. Browne was wounded, captured and died soon afterwards; five regimental commanders also died. Holbourne escaped; as had happened to both Hurry and Baillie

when they lost battles against Montrose in 1645, he was accused of being either a traitor or a coward for having been defeated. He was later court-martialled by the Committee of the Estates, but exonerated, although he resigned his commission (Grainger 1997). Gardiner says that half the Scots were killed, i.e. about 2,000 (Gardiner 1903).

Reid notes that legend has it that only thirty-five out of 800 Macleans were not killed. However, he suggests that there were only 500 in the regiment (Reid 2004). This underlines the fact that the casualty figures all rely on the English accounts, which are so similar as to suggest that they are official figures. Sir James Balfour is the only Scottish source, and his account of the battle states that casualties were roughly equal on each side at around 800 each. He also says that only 100 of Duart's men died with him (Balfour 1825). This account might not be correct but there is no intrinsic reason to privilege the official casualty figures promoted by Cromwell over this other set of figures.

Action

Reid gives a detailed description of the action that draws heavily on Lambert's own account. Colonel Overton had marched from Leith on 17 July whilst Cromwell made a diversion with the main army before Stirling. His force consisted of 1,600 foot plus four troops of cavalry. The landing took place on the peninsula at Queen's Ferry, and according to Cromwell, with the loss of only six men. The Scots had a garrison nearby at Burntisland under Colonel Barclay and it was his outpost at North Queensferry which fired on the landing. The alarm was quickly sent to Stirling and Browne and Holbourne were despatched with their brigades of cavalry and infantry. In the meantime, according to Lambert, a tense stand-off escalated as those Scots units already stationed in the area arrived. Cromwell, having decided against an assault with the troops already landed, ordered Lambert to cross with two regiments of horse and two of foot. Although Lambert pressed, he could only get the foot and his own regiment of horse over all that day (Saturday) and the following night. During the afternoon, he discovered that about 4,000 Scots had advanced as far as Dunfermline, about five miles away. This force was joined by another five hundred on the Sunday, and by the time the last of the English force was landing on Sunday 20 July, the Scots were very close.

The two armies drew up facing each other, with the English dug in on the Ferry Hills and the Scots on the lower slopes of Castland Hill, with their right anchored on Whinney Hill and their left on the Hill of Selvege or Muckle Hill, a little to the south of Inverkeithing. Some of them may have been dug in as Lambert spoke afterwards of burying some of the Scots dead in their own trenches. Holbourne was reluctant to assault the strong English position with just one infantry brigade, and Lambert did not intend to move until all his troops had landed. When Okey's horse joined Lambert, the outnumbered Holbourne decided to withdraw.

Lambert reported that Holbourne began to wheel as if to march away or take advantage of a 'steep mountain' (Castland Hill), indicating that Holbourne, having originally been facing south was now wheeling backwards, intending to retire to Dunfermline. Lambert immediately sent Okey's regiment forward to

engage the Scots rearguard, causing Holbourne to halt and draw up his troops in order of battle. Maclean of Duart's regiment and probably Buchanan's were on the right of the Scots army, with Holbourne's and Gray's on the left. It is likely that Barclay's musketeers were in a pass in front of Holbourne's right. Browne's cavalry brigade was on the right, with Brechin's horse and Augustine's 'moss-troopers' on the left. In Lambert's account, the English probably outnumbered the Scots by at least five or six hundred but the Scots had the advantage of the ground, with the English horse on the left being on particularly bad ground, facing a pass lined by Barclay's musketeers. He therefore placed his greatest strength on the right wing with his own regiment of horse, and two troops of Lytcott's and two troops of Okey's, all under Okey's command. On the left he stationed only four troops of Okey's and two of Lytcott's, all under Lytcott's command. The centre was made up of Lambert's own regiment of foot and Daniel's regiment of foot, with West's and Syler's regiments in reserve, commanded by Overton.

Once the deployments had been made, nothing happened for an hour and a half, with each side expecting to be attacked by the other. The trigger for action was a report from Cromwell that Scots reinforcements were marching from Stirling, and as he was pulling back to Linlithgow it was likely that even more would be sent. Lambert's account says only that it was 'resolved we should climb the hill to them, which accordingly we did, and through the Lord's strength, put them to an absolute rout'. In reality, it was not quite so straightforward. Browne on the Scots right led a cavalry charge using the slope; the Scots lancers broke the English cavalry opposite, who were probably Lytcott's inexperienced troopers. However, Lytcott counter-attacked with his own reserves and routed Browne's horse, which had no reserves, capturing Browne. On the left, Brechin and Augustine were initially successful, but neither unit was well disciplined and they, in turn, were routed by Okey's reserve, probably led by Lambert himself.

With the rout of the Scots cavalry, the initial phase of the battle was over in a very short time, according to Lambert, and with very little serious fighting. It seems the Scots cavalry either covered the retreat of the infantry, or that Holbourne withdrew the infantry leaving the cavalry to fight on alone. The pursuit of the defeated was, like that of Dunbar, protracted and bloody. Holbourne's experienced troops and Gray's regiment both seem to have escaped intact, although it is said that the Pinkerton Burn ran red with blood for three days, but Buchanan's and Maclean of Duart's Highland regiments fleeing across an open valley to the west of the Pinkerton Burn were destroyed after a four hour running battle. Lambert claimed to have taken 1,400 prisoners, including Browne and Buchanan, and said that more than that were killed because

> 'divers of them were Highlanders and had very ill quarter, and I am persuaded few of them escaped without a knock'.

The retreat ended on the slopes around Pitreavie Castle just over a mile north of the original Scots' position. The Highlanders apparently sought refuge in the castle but the owners, named Wardlaw, refused entry and added to their woes by dropping stones on them from the battlements. Maclean of Duart and his men turned to fight, and he was killed, but not, apparently, before seven of his clansmen in turn had stood between him and the English, crying

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'*Fear eile airson Eachuinn!*' and each been killed. Most accounts, following the English sources, state that all but thirty-five out of 800 Highlanders were killed, although Scottish accounts suggest in contrast that only 100 of Maclean's men were killed.

The victory secured the bridge-head for the English and Cromwell was able to ship across his whole army and set about the final defeat of the Scots (Reid 2004).

Grainger's account is similar but he gives more detail about the landing. Unlike earlier abortive attempts to land in Fife, this crossing was carefully planned, using a port not previously threatened and transporting the English forces in specially constructed flatboats. The crossing took place closer to Cromwell's headquarters than to Overton's, but the movement of troops from Edinburgh and Leith to the crossing looked like a movement to reinforce Cromwell and therefore gained the element of surprise. Cromwell's camp was under Scots observation and any early movement would have been seen and its purpose understood. The withdrawal of garrison troops was basically free of risk because Harrison was due to arrive shortly with 4,000 men. The landing took place at the narrowest point of the Forth, but also close to the guns of Inchgarvie Castle on a small island. The landing was also close to the small fort at North Queensferry and below a new fortification on the hills of the peninsula known to the English as 'The Great Sconce', which had 17 guns. The landing seems to have taken place at the neck of the small peninsula, on one or both of its sides, or at Port Laing on its eastern side. The Great Sconce and the Fort at North Queensferry were overrun quickly, and four small armed ships, loaded with coal and salt, were captured in Inverkeithing Bay (Grainger 1997).

Cromwell provided a short account of the battle in a letter to Speaker Lenthall on 21 July from Linlithgow. He writes that Overton landed with about 1,400 foot and some horse and dragoons at North Ferry. Cromwell decided that the fortification should not be attacked with this force (presumably here he refers to Scottish entrenchments rather than the gun batteries, which fell in the first landing) but sent Lambert across with two regiments of horse and two of foot. His report of the battle is brief:

> 'They came to a close charge and totally routed the enemy; having taken about forty or fifty colours, killed near two-thousand, some say more; have taken Sir John Browne, their Major-General, who commanded in chief, and other Colonels and considerable officers killed and taken and about five or six hundred prisoners [amended next day by Cromwell to 1500-1600]. The enemy is removed from their ground with their whole army; but whither we know not certainly. This is an unspeakable mercy' (Carlyle 1904).

There are other contemporary accounts; James Baynes, a Cornet in Cromwell's army at Linlithgow, wrote to Captain Adam Baynes, his cousin. On 19 July, he says that a considerable party of foot and horse the previous Wednesday night had surprised an enemy fort in Fife, over against Queen's Ferry 'much in manner of an island and 4 miles compass.' He mentions Colonels Overton, Lytcott and Daniell being there with about 2,000 horse and foot and dragoons. He also says that the English have taken about 20 pieces

of ordinance, most of them taken from the enemy in their fort and the rest from some ships taken thereabouts. Concluding, he writes

> 'According to all relations the King's forces do lessen, many of them being almost ready to starve. Now that we have gotten footing in Fife I hope we shall gain ground of them daily.'

Writing on 22 July he reports the successful battle:

> 'Sir John Brown was commanded with about 4,000 men to repulse our forces who had possessed themselves of a little island in Fife. They came within a mile or less of our works, whereupon the Major General, though not fully provided for them, drew out and engaged them, and on a sudden put them to flight, slew about 2,000 of them, took 1500 prisoners and about 50 colours. Sir John Brown is taken and divers other considerable persons not yet known. Collo. Scott is slain and its thought Lt Gen Holborne; the full of things we yet have not. We had the pursuit three miles. The rest of their army is much humbled with this business so that they dare not be seen of us'.

Lambert's wife writing to the same recipient also on 22 July uses the same figures of 2,000 killed and 1,500 captured.

> 'We have lost butt few, but many wounded, most of which was in my husband's regiment of hors. Your brother Pease was in the pursuit 8 miles but he is safe and well...my husband's hors was wounded and a brace of bullets found betwixt his cot and armes, but I bles the Lord hee is safe and well .'

On 26 July, Cornet Baynes was in Fife, from where he reported Inchgarvie had been taken with around 20 pieces of ordnance; on 29 July, he wrote that Burntisland had been captured with many guns and arms:

> 'The enemy therein (about 400 men) have terms to march away with every man his armes, drums beating etc.' (Akerman 1856).

Balfour was in the Scottish army and his account was very different to the others, suggesting that the Scots were hugely outnumbered and that casualties were about equal. In his account, the English force landed on 17 July without any opposition and fortified the hill between the Ferry and 'Innerkethen'. On Sunday 20 July, 2,500 horse and foot from Stirling met 10,000 of the English. He says that there were similar numbers of dead on each side, about 800 Scots, most of them foot, who 'fought valiantly and sold their lives at a dear rate'. The young Laird of McLean was slain with 100 of his friends and followers (Balfour 1825).

Aftermath and Consequences

The victory allowed Cromwell to transport the bulk of his forces across to Fife; Leslie, wary after the defeat at Dunbar, did not engage. By 26 July, Cromwell reported that he had 13,000-14,000 men and on 31 July he marched on Perth. The town surrendered on 2 August, cutting the Scots' lines of communication to the north. Leslie was left with little choice but to fall in with Charles' futile plan to march into England to try to raise Royalist support. The departure of Leslie's army left an open field for Cromwell. Stirling Castle surrendered on 15 August, Dundee was stormed and sacked on 1 September and Aberdeen occupied without a fight a week later. The last Scots forces in

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Scotland, commanded by the Marquis of Huntly and the Earl of Balcarres, surrendered by 3 December and when Dunottar Castle surrendered on 24 May 1652 the war in Scotland was finally over. The Scots army which invaded England was destroyed at Worcester on 3 September 1651 (Reid 2004).

Events & Participants

The Parliamentarian army was commanded by Major-General John Lambert. Lambert had fought for Parliament throughout the First English Civil War. He was at Marston Moor and later at Preston as Cromwell's second-in-command. In 1651, after Inverkeithing, he was with Cromwell at Worcester, the battle that ended Scotland's role in the Wars of the Three Kingdoms. He was a commissioner for Scotland's affairs and appointed briefly as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland; he took a role of leading military interests in the Protectorate, and led an army to meet Monck after Richard Cromwell's resignation; Monck brought about the Restoration of Charles II in 1660, and Lambert ended his days in prison as a traitor to the Crown.

The Scots infantry was commanded by Major General James Holbourne and the Scots cavalry by Sir John Browne. Holbourne fought against the Crown throughout the First English Civil War as an infantry commander. In 1645, he was offered a commission in the New Model Army but declined. He was one of the three man deputation from the Committee of Estates who opened unsuccessful negotiations with Cromwell in 1648 about the fate of the king and the future relationship between the two parliaments. In 1650, he was the commander of the escort that took the captive Marquis of Montrose from Ardvreck Castle to Edinburgh, where Montrose was executed. Holbourne was also part of Leslie's army at Dunbar later that year, and like him was able to escape to Stirling. From here, he was sent to engage the English landing at Inverkeithing Bay, commanding the cavalry on this occasion, and Holbourne once again was able to escape the battlefield.

Sir John Brown of Fordell was an experienced cavalry commander, who had driven a Royalist army under Lord Digby and Sir Marmaduke Langdale back into England in a small engagement known as the Battle of Annan Moor in late October 1645. They had been trying to force a passage north to link up with Montrose, although by that stage he had already been forced to flee after his defeat at Philiphaugh.

Sir Hector Maclean of Duart, the eighteenth clan chief of Clan Maclean and second Baronet of Morvern, was in command of the Highland soldiers during the battle. He and his father had fought for Montrose in 1645, and Maclean now found himself allied with his former enemies against Cromwell. He was killed in the battle, and one of the two slogans (war cries) of the Macleans dates from the battle: *Fear eile airson Eachuinn!*. This is a reference to seven brothers who are supposed to have shouted this, which translates as "Another for Hector", as each in turn stepped forward to protect their clan chief. All seven of the brothers were killed, and Hector died with them near Pitreavie Castle.

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Context

Charles I, King of both England and Scotland, was executed by the English Parliament on 30 January 1649. Shortly thereafter the Covenanter government of Scotland proclaimed the exiled Charles II as King of Scotland because they had not been consulted about the matter and had not had any intention of executing the King. While they were prepared to declare Charles II as the new king, they sought to impose conditions, namely that he should accept the Covenants and abandon his father's ideas of establishing an Episcopal church and repossessing land once belonging to the Catholic Church; they also wanted him to promote Presbyterianism in England as well. Charles II had no intention of accepting the Covenanters' terms, so he prevaricated in the negotiations while encouraging Montrose to return to Scotland and raise a new Royalist army. However, after Montrose's adventure collapsed in defeat at the Battle of Carbisdale on 27 April 1650, Charles signed the Treaty of Breda on 1 May 1650 whereby he accepted the terms of the previous year; both he and the Covenanters recognised this agreement as being hollow. Montrose was executed in Edinburgh on 21 May 1650, and Charles returned to Scotland on 23 June 1650, where he signed the Solemn League and Covenant.

The English and Scottish parliaments deeply distrusted one another. The Scots feared that the English would try to annex Scotland and impose their own Independent church structure; the English feared that the Scots would try to restore Charles to the throne of England and impose Presbyterianism. Both sets of suspicions were correct; the Covenanters intended to establish Presbyterianism as the Church across Britain, while the Independents in the New Model Army had no intention of seeing a Stuart on the throne again or of accepting Presbyterianism. They decided on a pre-emptive strike and on 22 July 1650, Oliver Cromwell, the Lord General, crossed the border at Berwick with an army of over 16,000. The Scots army was small and the new levies which were being raised needed to be assembled and trained, so Alexander Leslie, Earl of Leven, decided to concentrate his forces on Edinburgh, rather than try to oppose Cromwell's march north. Faced by forts and entrenchments stretching from Edinburgh to Leith, Cromwell could not bring the Scots to battle on his terms and after several weeks of military setbacks he withdrew towards Dunbar. At this point the Scots went over to the offensive and pushed the English back to Dunbar where a battle took place on 3 September 1650. The Scottish commander, David Leslie, was forced by the Committee of the Estates to move to the lower ground, giving Cromwell a tactical advantage that led to a heavy defeat for the Scots. Leslie fell back to Stirling while Cromwell advanced on Edinburgh, which surrendered without a fight; he did not reach Stirling until 17 September.

Although Leslie was in the process of reorganising his battered forces and the town was not fully fortified, Cromwell decided that it could not be taken by frontal assault or outflanked and he fell back to Linlithgow and Edinburgh; this does raise questions over Cromwell's perception of the state of Leslie's army and defences. It is rather odd, if the victory at Dunbar had been as crushing as Cromwell's account declared, that he was reluctant to mop up the remnants of a defeated army in a partially defended town. Over the following months, whilst Charles was crowned at Scone on 1 January 1651, the Scots

army at Stirling was growing stronger and mounting successful raids and small offensives, always able to fall back on Stirling if necessary. Cromwell needed to outflank Leslie if he was to break the deadlock. A small force under Colonel Monck had unsuccessfully tried a landing at Burntisland on the north bank of the Firth of Forth in January 1651, and Cromwell decided to try this ploy again with a larger force. The subsequent victory at the Battle of Inverkeithing allowed the English to outflank Leslie.

Battlefield Landscape

The landscape around Inverkeithing and Rosyth has been heavily developed since 1651, with quarrying, land reclamation, linear transport and communication routes, urban expansion and enterprise development all impacting on the landscape. Despite this, large areas of the battlefield survive. The best preserved area is the location of the Parliamentarian camp in the Ferry Hills, where the only development has been related to radio masts. The defences for the position may well survive as buried features on and around the top of the hill. The location of the Scottish position opposite the Parliamentarian camp on the slope of Whinny Hill below Castland Hill is now arable land with woodland on the upper slope. It has been partially destroyed by the A90 and the B980, but the location of the initial fighting seems to be largely intact.

The bulk of the fighting retreat to Pitreavie Castle now lies under the town of Rosyth, while the location of the last stand of the Macleans has been partially swallowed in the development of the Carnegie Campus and enterprise development around Pitreavie Castle. However, much of the development around the castle has been relatively low density, and areas survive that appear to be relatively undisturbed. There is an area of arable lying between the railway line and the A823 around 300m south of Pitreavie Castle that is relatively undisturbed and which is likely to have been the scene of considerable fighting in the later stages of the battle; it is also likely to be where the majority of the killing took place.

Location

Most features of the landscape are still present, and provide an understanding of the course of the battle. The Ferry Hills are quite steep and form a strongly defensible position; it is easy to understand why the Scottish army did not attempt to assault the Parliamentarian's strong position and attempt to push them back into the sea . The only real option once the Ferry Hills had been taken was to besiege them and try to cut off supplies from the Forth. Whinny Hill and Castland Hill are more gentle slopes but also provide a strong position, with good protection from flanking moves, and effectively cut off the Queensferry peninsula from the land further north. By deploying the Scots army here, Holbourne presented the English force with a similar problem to his own. Once the two armies were deployed in this manner, and following some small skirmishing while the Scots deployed, a stand-off ensued across the valley between, with neither side willing to attempt an assault on the

other's strong position. However, when Lambert was driven to action by news from Cromwell he had no choice but to attack the Scots position.

With the subsequent retreat of the Scots to the more open ground north of Castland Hill, the battle was effectively over. With the Scots army in disarray and Lambert now able to move his forces more freely, there was little chance the Scots would be able to rally a successful defence against him.

It remains easy to see the overall nature of the landscape and the role it would play in the battle in both the areas of initial deployment and conflict and the area of the rout and slaughter further to the north, despite the development which has subsequently taken place in areas of the battlefield.

Terrain

The landscape has been cut on several occasions by road carriageways and railway lines, and the coastline has changed with the reclamation of land on the western side of Inverkeithing at the base of Castland Hill. This gives a false impression of the nature of the Scottish position in 1651 because Whinney Hill is no longer against the coast. The nature of the ground over which the Scottish army fought its retreat is impossible to assess as it now lies under the town of Rosyth, while the area of the last stand near Pitreavie Castle is partially developed but does have areas of open arable land.

Condition

No further information.

Archaeological and Physical Remains and Potential

Inverkeithing has a high potential for archaeological remains, including evidence of the entrenchments created by the English Parliamentarians as they established their beachhead on the peninsula. It is likely that there will be evidence of the camp within the area of undeveloped hillside on the Ferry Hills. There is also a high possibility of archaeological remains deposited by the camp itself within the entrenchments. It is also possible that there are Scottish entrenchments on the slopes opposite, although no surface indication of such trenches has been recorded. Lambert's account states that some of the Scottish dead were buried in their trenches, although conceivable this might refer to cultivation trenches that can be seen elsewhere in the vicinity. In addition, Cromwell's letter to Speaker Lenthall on 21 July 1651 reported that he considered the Scottish 'fortification' was too much for Overton's initial landing force to assault and that reinforcements would be required. A reasonable interpretation of this is that the Scots were entrenched on Whinney Hill. However, no surface indication of such trenches has been recorded.

Pitreavie Castle stands on the north side of Rosyth, and is now in the middle of an area of considerable development. In 1851, several skeletons were found with a leather bag containing coins of Charles I close to the castle (NS18SW 15; NS 1165 8481); these are presumed to have been victims of

the battle. There is also a substantial Second World War military landscape around the castle.

The battle involved musketry, cavalry, pikes, swords and even archery on the Scottish side, with considerable hand to hand fighting; this is particularly true of the area around Pitreavie Castle where most of the Scots casualties would have been inflicted. This means that there is a reasonable probability of recovering artefacts from the battle and being able to determine some of the choreography of the fighting. There will have been musket balls, some arrows and the hand to hand fighting will have caused personal items such as buckles, buttons etc to have been lost. There is a mention in the account of the Macleans of artillery fire from the summit of Ferry Hill into the Scottish lines, which would mean that shot and shrapnel may be present, but the same account appears not to know about the retreat on Pitreavie Castle and so should be treated with care (Maclean 1899: 180).

There is a chance of encountering human remains, particularly if the English version of the casualty figures is accepted. However, many of the Scottish infantry were local levies from Inverkeithing and Dunfermline, and it is reasonably likely that they will have been recovered by their families or at the very least given proper burial. The Maclean dead, however, are more likely to have been buried in a mass grave.

Cultural Association

The Battle of Inverkeithing, despite its great historical significance, has left very little trace in popular culture. There appear to be no songs or pipe tunes about the battle, and the only real trace is the birth of the Maclean slogan '*Fear eile airson Eachuinn!*', relating to the slaughter of Macleans around Pitreavie Castle.

There is a small cairn with a plaque to the Macleans in both English and Gaelic, which stands a little to the east of the castle at NS 1184 8489. There is also an interpretation board with an account of the battle at this cairn. This is the only commemoration and interpretation of the battlefield, which is surprisingly little known considering the importance of the battle in the last stages of the Wars of the Three Kingdoms.

Commemoration & Interpretation

No further information.

Select Bibliography

Grainger, J.D. 1997. *Cromwell against the Scots. The Last Anglo-Scottish War, 1650-1652*. Tuckwell Press, East Linton. 104-11.

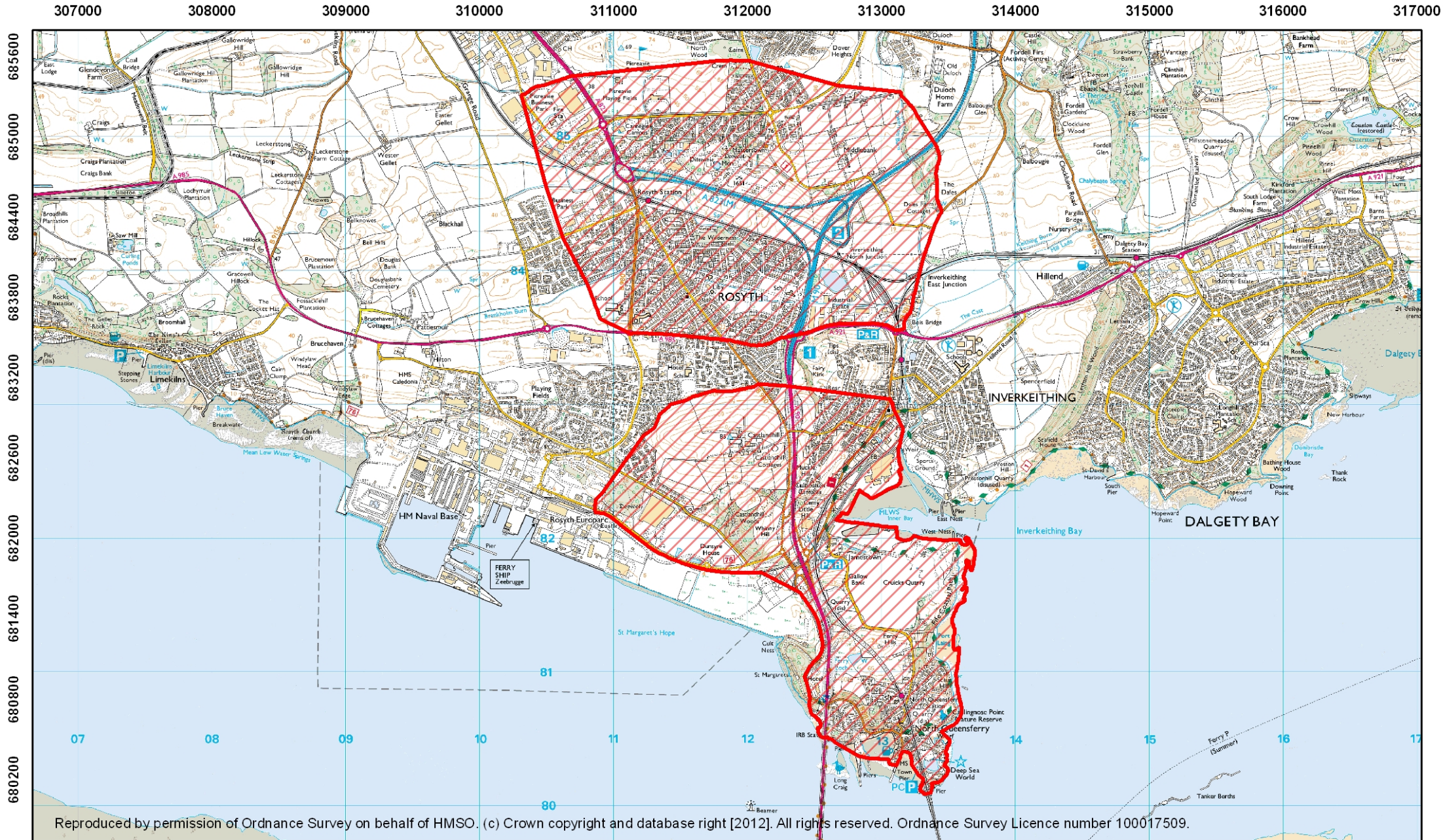Reid, S. 2004. *Battles of the Scottish Lowlands*. Pen and Sword, Barnsley. 74-102; 155.

Stevenson, D. 1977. *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Scotland 1644-1651*. Royal Historical Society, London. 204-207.

Full Bibliography

Information on Sources and Publications

In keeping with many of the battles of the Wars of the Three Kingdoms, there are a lot of personal accounts and letters about the fighting; these are largely English in origin. Lambert, the English commander, provided an account, while Cromwell provided brief details in a letter to the Speaker of the English Parliament. There are letters from eyewitnesses and from those who had spoken to eyewitnesses that fill out the detail. However, they are all from an English perspective and this must be taken into account when analysing the information they present. Lambert and Cromwell both had strong reason to present the battle as positively for Parliament as they could, since it would reflect well on them, while there is a consistency to all of the accounts of the casualty figures that might suggest the repetition of an official account.

The only contrasting account, taken from the Scottish perspective, is that of Sir James Balfour (c1600-c1658), the author of the four volume *Annals of Scotland*. He was Lord Lyon King of Arms to both Charles I and Charles II, and a confirmed Royalist, so his account must be considered as having a Scottish and a Royalist perspective. It is notable that he gives very different casualty figures to the English accounts, suggesting that casualties were roughly even and that the Scottish losses were far lower than the English accounts report. There is no reason to privilege either the English or the Scottish versions because there is no corroboration for either.

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Maclean, J.P. 1889. *A History of Clan Maclean from its First Settlement at Duard Castle in the Isle of Mull to the Present Period: including a genealogical account of some of the principal families together with their heraldry, legends, superstitions etc.* R Clarke & Co. 179-83.

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The Inventory of Historic Battlefields - Boundary Map

Inverkeithing II   20 July 1651   Local Authority: Fife

HISTORIC SCOTLAND
ALBA AOSMHOR

Inventory of Historic Battlefields boundary

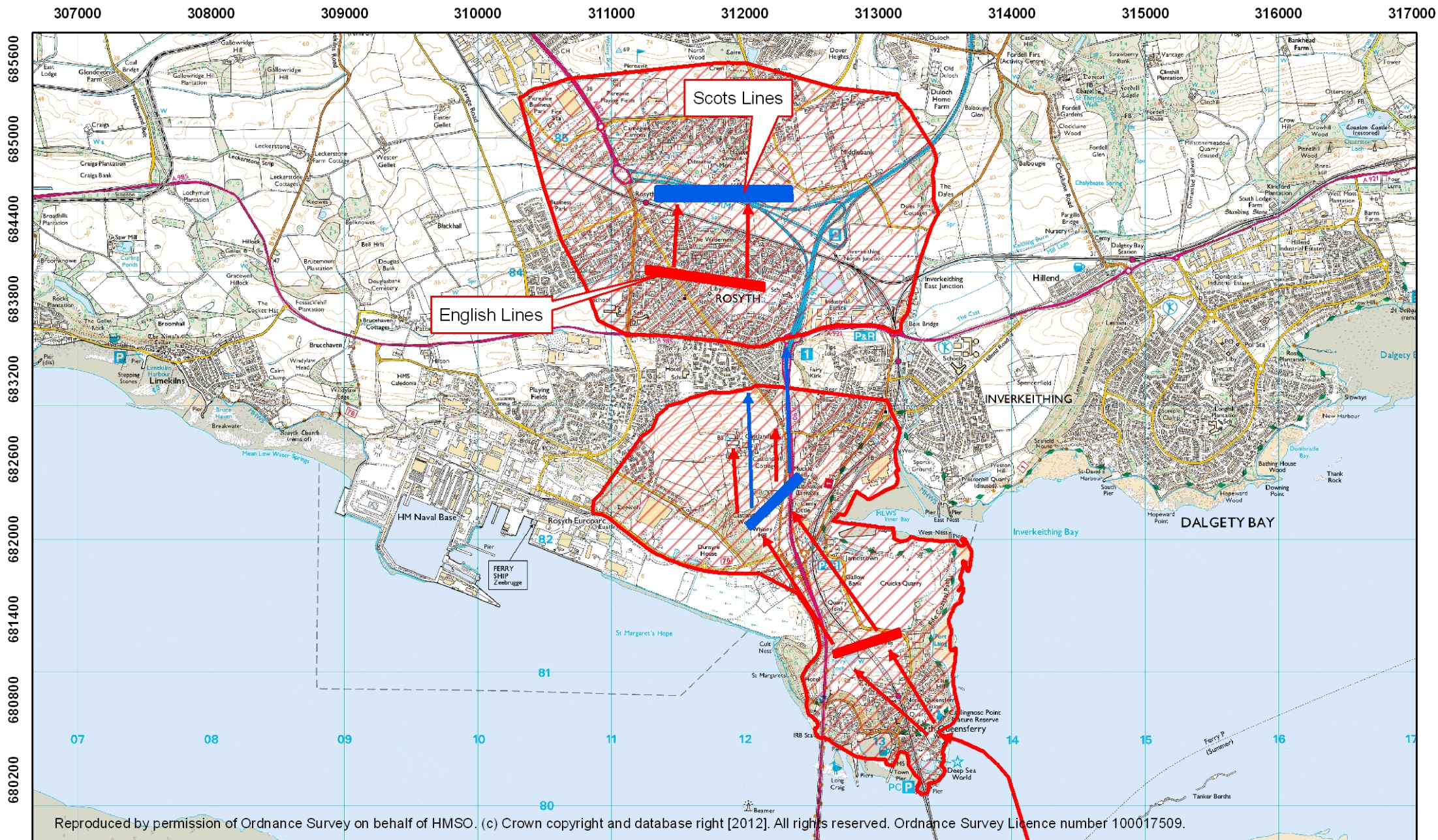Meters   0   500   1,000

The Inventory of Historic Battlefields - Deployments

Inverkeithing II   20 July 1651   Local Authority: Fife

HISTORIC SCOTLAND
ALBA AOSMHOR

Scots Lines

English Lines

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///// Inventory of Historic Battlefields boundary   → English Movement
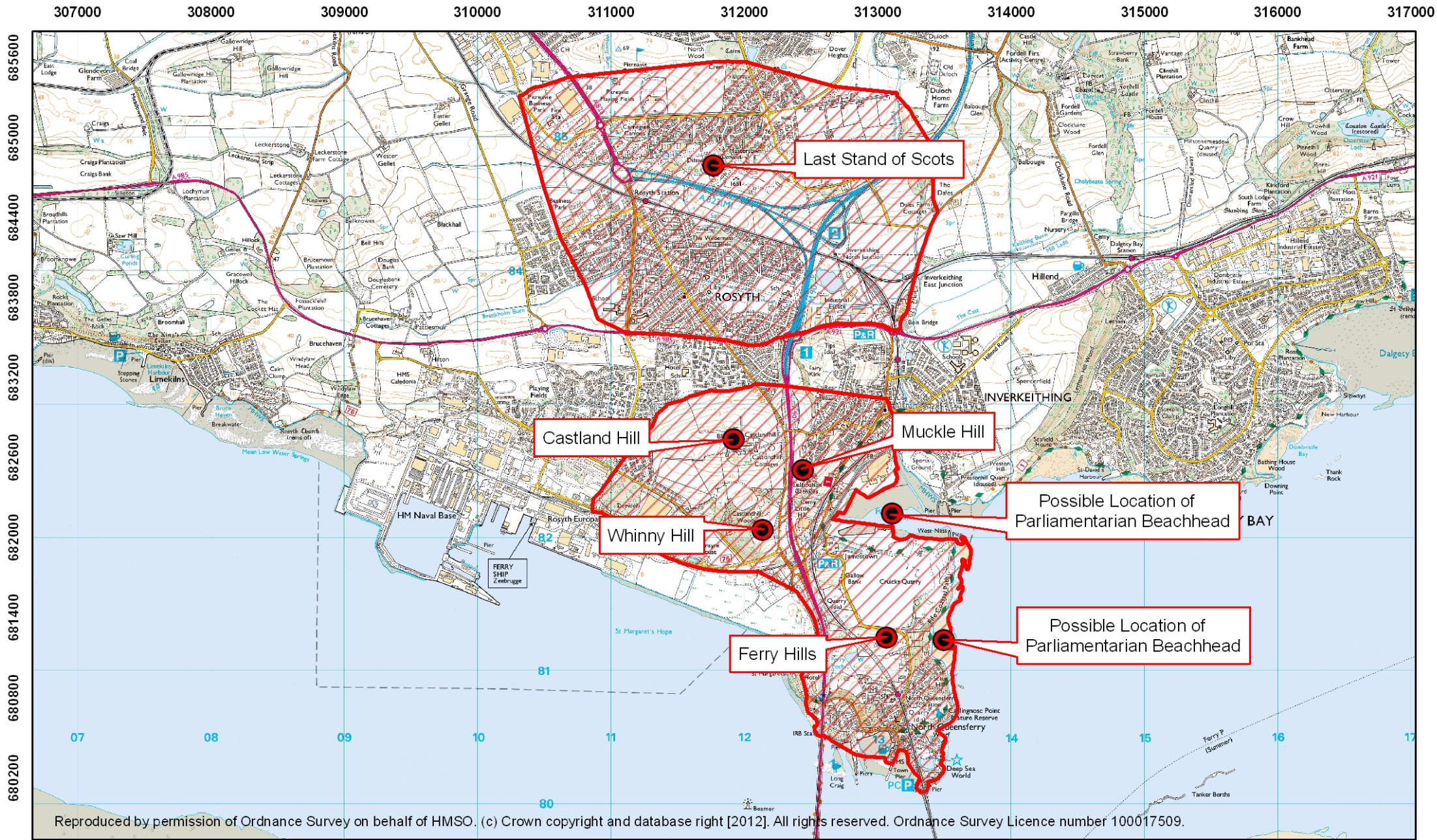
→ Scots Movement

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The Inventory of Historic Battlefields - Features

Inverkeithing II   20 July 1651   Local Authority: Fife

HISTORIC SCOTLAND ALBA AOSMHOR

Last Stand of Scots

Castland Hill

Muckle Hill

Whinny Hill

Possible Location of Parliamentarian Beachhead

Ferry Hills

Possible Location of Parliamentarian Beachhead

▨ Inventory of Historic Battlefields boundary

0   500   1,000
Meters