



The Inventory of Historic Battlefields – Battle of Dunkeld

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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DUNKELD

Alternative Names:

21 August 1689

Local Authority: Perth and Kinross

NGR centred: NO 003 426

Date of Addition to Inventory: 14 December 2012

Date of last update: N/A

Overview and Statement of Significance

The first Jacobite Rising occurred in 1689, in the wake of the ousting of the Stuart King, James VII and II and his replacement by William of Orange in the so-called Glorious Revolution. The Jacobites (from the Latin for James) were led by Viscount Dundee, John Graham of Claverhouse and won a decisive early victory at the Battle of Killiecrankie on 17 July 1689, although Dundee was killed in the battle. It was followed a month later by the Battle of Dunkeld, fought on 21 August 1689.

Dunkeld was an urban battle, with the town held by a garrison of Government troops from the Cameronian Regiment under Lieutenant-Colonel William Cleland's command. After a long and bitter struggle, which saw much of the town burned to the ground, the Jacobites withdrew, leaving the Government force the surprised victors.

Dunkeld is an incredibly significant battle in the history of 17th century Scotland, occurring at a time when King William was yet to wholly solidify his position on the throne and on the back of a significant Jacobite victory at Killiecrankie. Had the Jacobites won at Dunkeld, the path would have been open to them to advance on a weakly defended and strongly Jacobite Perth and subsequently continue to Stirling, a situation for which the Privy Council had already made preparations to flee should it occur and which would have been a great boost to the Jacobite cause. The Cameronian's unyielding defence of the town prevented the Jacobites advancing any further south and turned the tide of a Rising which had thus far gone badly for the Government into one of increasing difficulty for the Jacobites, whose numbers dwindle drastically after Dunkeld and who essentially cease to present the threat they had after Killiecrankie, confined to skirmishing and minor actions in the Highlands until finally being utterly dispersed at Cromdale in May 1690.

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

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

- The north bank of the River Tay, stretching to the east and west of the town to accommodate the routes of the Jacobite advances to attack and the fighting which took place as they did.
- The level ground to the north of the Cathedral, much of which was occupied by Dunkeld House and elements of the town in 1689.
- The hills to the north of the town, including Gallow Hill which provided an important vantage point for the Jacobites and was the location of their cannon.
- Hills to the west of the town, which again provided important vantage points for the Jacobites as they advanced.
- Ground to the east and north-east including Shiochies Hill, the location of some of the early stages of the battle prior to the Cameronians withdrawal into the town.

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Historical Background to the Battle

With their victory at the Battle of Killiecrankie on 27 July 1689 tempered by the loss of John Graham of Claverhouse, the newly appointed Jacobite commander, Alexander Cannon, led his army through Braemar, pursued by General Mackay and a mounted column of Government troops. The Jacobites finally evaded this pursuit when they doubled back into the hills at Kincardine o' Neil, where Mackay was unwilling to follow. The Jacobites then advanced south toward Dunkeld.

The town of Dunkeld was defended by the Cameronians, recently raised from the ranks of the Covenanters. As a regiment they had yet to be blooded and were commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel William Cleland, who had been involved in both the battles of Drumclog and Bothwell Bridge in 1679. Cannon ordered the Jacobite army into the assault on the town of Dunkeld on the morning of 21 August 1689.

The engagement, which was to involve brutal street and house to house fighting was to rage for several hours and saw the Cameronian defenders gradually pushed back toward the cathedral in the face of a Jacobite assault on all sides. Cleland was killed early on in the battle, though it is said that he survived long enough to make sure that he did not expire within sight of his men. By the end of the battle most of the buildings in the town were on fire and both sides were running extremely low on ammunition. For reasons which remain obscure the still stronger Jacobites eventually withdrew from the action, leaving the all but beaten Government troops victorious.

The Armies

Colonel Alexander Cannon, an Irish officer who was described by Lt. Col. Blackader as 'destitute of the resolution and military talents of his predecessor [Viscount Dundee]' (Crichton 1824) commanded an army of Highlanders, some on horseback, while the army was laden with baggage. McLean (1857, 23) sensibly suggests that many of the horses and much of the baggage represented booty from Killiecrankie. The Jacobite army consisted of most of the clans who had fought at Killiecrankie. In addition, the Stuarts of Appin supplied 120 men. There were also Frasers, McFarlanes, and Gordons of Strathdon and Glenlivet. Alexander Steuart brought 600-1000 men from Atholl and Strathtay. There was a contingent of Macgregors under Glengyle (Rob Roy's father), along with a contingent of Glencoe men and some islanders - Macdonald of Sleat's men from North Uist, Clanranald men under the Tutor of Benbecula and MacNeil of Barra's men. Last but not least there were additional men from the north-east, who strengthened the cavalry to four troops.

William Cleland, a veteran of Drumclog (1679), commanded a newly formed regiment of Covenanters deployed at Dunkeld in the defence of the town. It was formed just four months before the Battle of Dunkeld on 16 April 1689, and took its name from the Covenanter Reverend Richard Cameron. The men were enlisted from the United Societies, which also tended to be known at that time as Cameronians. The troops supplied by Colonel Ramsey and led by Lord Cardross consisted of two troops of cavalry and three of dragoons (although Blackader's account suggests one troop and four troops

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respectively) and these forces were withdrawn prior to the main battle. The Cameronian's were largely staunch Covenanters, motivated by religious belief as much as any other factor, and some were veterans of the Covenanter rebellion of 1679. There is some evidence that the Cameronian's were not expected to survive their deployment to Dunkeld, and indeed the strongly independent nature of the regiment seems to have been of concern to the authorities of the time. To further compound the Cameronian's troubles, when they had received equipment in May, they had only been provided 400 outdated matchlock muskets, with a further 100 to be sent, along with 400 pikes and 40 halberds for the regiment's sergeants.

Numbers

Jacobites: 4,000 to 5,000 men, including 1,000 on horseback. However, Episcopalian accounts, which sought to undermine the Cameronian achievement, estimate the number of Jacobite men at 2,500, while Balhadie states 3,000. Other sources, including prisoners and the report prepared by Mackay, quote 5,000 including the 1,000 Atholl men.

Government (Cameronians): 700-800 men. The initial strength of the regiment when raised was 1200, but at the time of Dunkeld 400 men of the regiment had been dispatched to

"Lorn and Cantire, to guard the west coast..." (Crichton, 1824).

Losses

Jacobites: c. 300.

Cameronians: c. 50. However, Blackader's diary documents 15 men killed and thirty injured in addition to the following officers: Lt. Col. Cleland, Lt. Stuart, Major Henderson, Captain Caldwell.

Action

The battle of Dunkeld is characterised by violent street fighting in multiple simultaneous locations, as the Jacobites assaulted the town from every available direction. At seven o'clock on the morning of 21 August, the battle began with four Jacobite cannon (probably the leather guns the Jacobites are likely to have captured at Killiecrankie) positioned on the Gallow Hill north of Dunkeld. Soon after, one hundred of Sir Alexander Maclean's shock troops armed with swords and protected by helmet, half armour and targes, charged Shiochies Hill, followed by the rest of the regiment with firelocks offering covering fire. More men (possibly Maclean's) joined the assault, with two horse troops advancing to their left. Cleland had placed Captain Hay in charge of a group of men defending Shiochies Hill and in support Ensign Lockhart advanced to a stone dyke at the foot of the hill with 28 men. Cleland could not defend the east of the town on account of an overhanging hill and a wood close to the houses so these buildings were burned when attacked and the outposts pulled back to a barricade at the Cross.

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Only one hour into the battle, Lt. Col. Cleland was mortally wounded close to Dunkeld House by shots to the head and the liver. Command passed to Major James Henderson as second-in-command, only for Henderson to be killed as well almost immediately. Captain George Monroe, commanding the defence of the barricades at the Cross, then took overall command, after leaving command of the barricades to Lt. Henry Stewart of Livingstone. This position was itself later rushed by the Jacobites, with Stewart killed as he attempted to withdraw his men.

Hay and the men on Shiochies Hill were driven back to Dunkeld House and he and Sir Alexander Maclean suffered broken legs. The western detachment retreated to the cathedral which held 100 of the Cameronians, along with those Dunkeld inhabitants who had not evacuated. A number of Government troops were trapped in houses during the retreat and killed.

The Jacobite attack then developed along the riverbank, to the south of the cathedral, where barricaded houses were stormed and against the cathedral itself, where the assault was led by the Appin Stewarts.

In the face of this onslaught, the Cameronians were gradually driven back, soon holding only Dunkeld House, the cathedral and three other houses. Their pikemen and halberdiers were attacked by Jacobites armed with swords and targes, while some musketeers who had neither swords nor bayonets entered houses and began to open fire on the Jacobites from the cover they provided:

“The rebels advanced most boldly upon the yard-dykes all round, even upon those parts which stood within less than 40 paces from the river, where they crowded in multitudes without regard to the shot liberally pour'd in their faces” (Crichton 1824, 95).

From inside the houses, Jacobite snipers harassed the Cameronians and Monroe responded by sending out small parties with blazing faggots to set fire to the houses, killing some of the Jacobites and locking others in to burn to their deaths:

“...which raised a hideous noise from these wretches in the fire” (Crichton 1824, 97).

The Jacobites also set fire to houses in order to push back the Cameronian defenders and by the end of the battle only three houses survived unburned. The thick smoke from the burning buildings also hindered the efforts of both sides as it shrouded the embattled town.

By the end of the battle, the Cameronians' powder was running extremely low and, with no further retreat possible, they prepared to make a final stand. Then, just as they prepared to meet their fate the Jacobites withdrew. It is unclear whether this unexpected move was due to a lack of ammunition, a fear of their Cameronian opponents or concern that reinforcements would soon arrive. Whatever the reason, the Jacobites retreated to hills to the north-west of Dunkeld while the Cameronians, unsure what was happening, re-fortified their defences.

One element of the action over which there remains significant debate is the length of the engagement. While the sources seem to agree that the battle begins between around 6am and 7am, there is debate over whether it concluded at 11am or 11pm. General Hugh Mackay's own account of the

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battle does not give any indication of the length of the battle, but Blackader's eyewitness account states that the enemy is first sighted at around 6am and he describes the worst of the hand to hand fighting as:

"...in this hot service we continued above three hours." (Crichton, 1824)

Finally, an officer is despatched to Perth with news of the victory at 12 o' clock (Blackader does not say if this is 12am or 12pm). This account of the duration of the battle is taken by others such as Macaulay and Hume-Brown as entirely within the morning, giving a total length of the combat as around four hours. However, John Mackay in 1836 gives a time of 11pm for the end of the battle, giving a total of 16 hours for the length of the battle. This is supported by Burton and Grant among others. While 16 hours seems like an excessively long period of time for a battle such as this, the evidence is currently insufficient to completely rule out either possibility. In August 1689, the last of the daylight would be around 11pm, and if night was falling it would certainly be a valid reason for the Jacobite withdrawal. While Blackader's account states that the worst of the fighting lasts for more than 3 hours, he does not clearly say if this stage of the battle begins early in the day (around 8am if the 11am conclusion is to be taken) or after several hours of fighting have already occurred (late afternoon or evening if we take the 11pm conclusion). We do know that whether the battle lasted for four hours or sixteen, by its close both sides were essentially out of ammunition and powder and the Cameronian's were steeling themselves for a desperate last stand when the Jacobites withdrew, highlighting that regardless of its length it was a violently intense engagement.

Aftermath and Consequences

The Jacobite tactic of firing single volleys before charging in close with the sword proved disastrous in the built up environment of Dunkeld, where the Cameronian's seemingly outdated pikes and halberds proved more than a match for the Jacobite broadswords. Cannon has also been criticised for being ill-prepared and not making effective use of his artillery in close-range attacks on Dunkeld House or the dykes (Stevenson 1942).

After Dunkeld, the Jacobites retired to Blair Castle and on the following Saturday the Laird of Bellachan arrived at Dunkeld seeking a treaty. Major-General Mackay hindered the Jacobite army's attempts to recruit more supporters and remained in the Highlands with an army in order to contain the rebels. Having emerged victorious with very few casualties, the Cameronian Regiment

"...was everywhere commended for their intrepid conduct. Their unparalleled courage was the subject of universal admiration" (Crichton 1824, 100).

The Cameronians marched to Aberdeen then Montrose and remained there for much of the time they were stationed in Scotland. Their reputation preceded them, as a group of Highlanders who attempted to plunder Montrose took flight upon hearing of the imminent arrival of the Cameronians, and they also defeated a small group of Jacobites at Cardross.

After the battle of Dunkeld, the Jacobite army reduced in size and Col. Cannon's reputation is said by Blackader to have suffered badly (Crichton 1824), to the extent that he was thereafter unable to entice his force to launch

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any large-scale attacks. Despite this downturn in Jacobite fortunes much of the region continued to oppose William's rule and skirmishes did occur.

The Jacobite army struggled on through the winter, only suffering their final defeat at Cromdale in May 1690, when they were surprised in camp and routed. Not long after the suppression of this first Jacobite Rising in Scotland, MacKay constructed Fort William on the site of another fort originally built for Cromwell by General Monck in 1654. By July that year, William of Orange had emerged victorious over James VII of Scotland in the Battle of the Boyne in Ireland, delivering a near fatal blow to the Jacobite Risings – the *coup de gras* came at Aughrim on 12 July 1691. By 17th August 1691 William had offered a pardon to all Highlanders who would swear allegiance to him and the clans sent representatives to France, where James was now exiled, asking his permission to take the oath. His slow response combined with severe wintry conditions meant that some, including the MacDonald's of Glencoe, could not take the oath before the January 1st deadline, invoking a brutal government response in the form of the Massacre of Glencoe on 13 February 1692. Thereafter all remaining clans were persuaded to swear allegiance to William by the spring of that year.

However, the Jacobite cause itself remained strong, leading to further Risings in Scotland in 1715 ('The Fifteen'), 1719 ('The Nineteen') and 1745 ('The Forty-Five') until the final defeat on 16 April 1646 at the Battle of Culloden.

Events & Participants

Fighting under the command of Lt. Col. William Cleland, a veteran of Drumclog and Bothwell Brig, a garrison of ex-Covenanters defended Dunkeld (derived from the Gaelic *Dun Chailleinn*, Fort of the Caledonians), 15 miles to the north of Perth, on behalf of the Government against a group of Jacobites led by Colonel Alexander Cannon, testifying to a decisive shift in the Scottish political climate after the Glorious Revolution, or the Revolution of 1688. This was a defining period in Scottish history as a group of English parliamentarians from the Whig party of opposition, unwilling to accept James VII's newborn Roman Catholic son, James, as heir to the English throne, invited William of Orange to take the throne in his stead, thereby terminating the Stuart dynasty. Determined to return James VII and his later House of Stuart descendents to the throne, John Graham of Claverhouse, Viscount Dundee, raised an army, the so-called Jacobites (after the Latin for James, *Jacobus*) and launched the first of a series of rebellions known as the Jacobite Risings.

Lt. Col. William Cleland was the commander of the Cameronian regiment deployed to Dunkeld in August 1689. By the time of Dunkeld he was an experienced combatant, although General Mackay considered Cleland to be:

“...a sensible, resolute man though not much of a souldier.”

He had been present at Drumclog in 1679, and indeed can claim much of the credit for the victory there. At one point during the battle Cleland had hold of John Graham of Claverhouse's own bridle, and Graham was lucky to avoid

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being killed when Cleland slipped, and this started a lasting animosity between them until their deaths in 1689. Cleland also served as a captain in the subsequent defeat at Bothwell Bridge, after which he was forced into exile on the continent. He served as a spy for both the Monmouth Rebellion in 1685 and the arrival of William in 1688. Outside of his military life, he studied both medicine and law during his exile in the Netherlands, with his legal thesis addressing legal abuses against the Covenanters published at Utrecht in 1684, and was also a poet, with a collection of his works published posthumously in 1697.

Major James Henderson was second in command of the Covenanter regiment at Dunkeld, and had more military experience than Cleland. He too had been present at Bothwell Bridge and spent time in exile after the battle, undertaking military service on the continent before serving as a major under Argyll in the Monmouth Rebellion of 1685.

Captain George Monroe was the commander of the 18th Company of the Cameronians at Dunkeld, and following the loss of both Cleland and Henderson early in the battle he took overall command of the ultimately successful defence of the town.

Lord Cardross was another of the Covenanter commanders. He had previously been imprisoned for his beliefs, before he was banished to the Carolinas with Cleland's brother-in-law John Steel. He subsequently continued his exile in the Netherlands, from where he returned with William in 1688.

Colonel Alexander Cannon was the commander of the Jacobite army. He had assumed command following the death of John Graham of Claverhouse at the battle of Killiecrankie. However, he was far from Claverhouse's equal as a commander, with defeat at Dunkeld by the heavily outnumbered Cameronian's being probably the most prominent event of his tenure. Over the winter the numbers of his force dwindled and he was replaced as commander of the Jacobite army in April 1690 by Major-General Thomas Buchan.

Context

Seventeenth century Scotland was in a state of political and religious turmoil. Presbyterianism had spread across much of the country and in 1637 Archibald Johnston (Lord Warriston) orchestrated the revision of the National Covenant of 1581. Signed by James VI and adopted by the Church of Scotland, the Covenant was initially drawn up by John Craig as a means of countering the Roman Catholic Church's attempts to regain control of Scotland. In 1638, Warriston's revision of the Covenant was used as symbol of defiance against the attempts by Charles I to bring the Church of Scotland into alignment with the Church of England. As the *de facto* government of Scotland, the Covenanters defeated Charles I in the Bishop's Wars, damaging the Stuart monarchy and contributing directly to the outbreak of the English Civil War. Led by Archibald Campbell, 1st Marquess of Argyll, the Covenanters were the leading political party in Scotland; however, they were defeated in battle by Oliver Cromwell and Scotland was ultimately annexed

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under Cromwell's Commonwealth and the General Assembly of the Kirk lost all civil powers (Cowan 1968).

Following the Restoration of 1660 when Charles II was restored to his father's throne (having been crowned in Scotland in 1650), the Covenanters had become the oppressed, cast out of political power and surviving largely as a popular movement, particularly in south-west Scotland. During the 1660s, 1670s and 1680s, there were repeated efforts by Charles II's government to stamp out the Covenanters as a social and religious movement. The repression sparked off several rebellions, most notably in 1666, which ended in the battle of Rullion Green, and in 1679, where an initial Covenanter victory at Drumclog was followed by a decisive Government victory at Bothwell Bridge. The Covenanters were scattered and posed little further threat. In this atmosphere, Charles II died in 1685 and was succeeded by his Catholic brother, James VII & II. This marked a fundamental turning point in the balance of power in Britain as a whole, and was to have a major impact in Scotland.

Shortly after the accession of James VII & II in 1685, the Duke of Monmouth led the abortive Monmouth Rebellion with the Duke of Argyll; both men were subsequently captured and executed. James' rule grew ever more unpopular and the birth of James' son, who was Catholic and whose birth meant a Catholic dynasty on the British throne, gave an excuse for a group of English parliamentarians from the Whig party of opposition to invite William of Orange to take the throne. William's arrival drove James to flee to Ireland and he was declared deposed, with William and his wife Mary (James' eldest living child) crowned as the new monarchs. This brought the situation in Scotland back to that of the Wars of the Three Kingdoms; Scotland's monarch had been deposed in England, and the Scottish political establishment accepted the *fait accompli*. Others amongst the nobility were less prepared to accept the new regime, instead taking up arms to restore the king, echoing the efforts of James Graham, the Marquis of Montrose in the 1640s. Determined to return James VII to the throne, John Graham of Claverhouse, Viscount Dundee, raised an army and launched a rebellion. He and his supporters were known as Jacobites (after the Latin for James, *Jacobus*). The first battle of Dundee's Rising was at Killiecrankie in July 1689, where the Jacobites defeated a larger government army under General Hugh MacKay, Unfortunately Dundee was himself killed during the fighting. This meant that, ten years after the Covenanter rebellion had been destroyed at Bothwell Bridge in 1679, two of the main commanders of the Government forces present had subsequently been killed in rebellion against the Government: Monmouth in 1685 and Dundee in 1689.

With the loss of John Graham of Claverhouse at the Battle of Killiecrankie on 27 July 1689, the Jacobites appointed a new commander, Col. Alexander Cannon. He ordered the Jacobite army into the assault on the town of Dunkeld on the morning of 21 August 1689. The town was defended by the Cameronians, a regiment recently raised from the ranks of the Covenanters and taking its name from Richard Cameron, one of the leading Covenanter preachers of the Killing Times who had been killed in a skirmish at Airdsmoss on 22 July 1680. Initially fighting under the command of Lt. Col. William

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Cleland, a veteran of Drumclog and Bothwell Brig, the Covenanters preparing to defend Dunkeld seemed to have an almost impossible task before them.

Prior to the engagement at Dunkeld, General Mackay, the commander of the Government army, which had suffered so badly at the hands of the Jacobites at Killiecrankie, had been tracking the Jacobites through Braemar into Strathbogie with a mounted column for over a month, but was outmanoeuvred when Cannon and his men doubled back south into the hills at Kincardine o' Neil near Aboyne. Mackay, unwilling to follow them into the hills, advanced via Aberdeen and by 22 August, the day after the Battle of Dunkeld took place, had only managed to reach Drumlithie. Meanwhile Cannon, unaware of the presence of the Cameronians, had turned south-west and advanced towards Dunkeld.

The Cameronians had arrived in Dunkeld on 17 August under orders from the Privy Council in Edinburgh to defend the place, despite Mackay's warning that they were an inappropriate choice of regiment to send into the Episcopalian Highlands due to their staunchly Covenanter background. Despite the next day being Sunday, which was usually held sacrosanct by the Presbyterians, they commenced building defences, which was no mean feat given that the town lacked an encircling wall. Ditches were dug and the lead was stripped from Dunkeld house and melted down to bolster low ammunition reserves.

The Jacobites were convinced that the Cameronians intended to plunder and burn Dunkeld down and most of the townsfolk fled the area. Cannon's men gathered around the town and sent a messenger under a flag of truce to Cleland with a letter stating:

"We, the gentlemen assembled, being informed that ye intend to burn the town, desire whether ye come for peace or war, and to certify you that if ye burn any one house, we will destroy you."

Unmoved by this threat and aware that *Crann Tara* (the Fiery Cross) had been sent out across the area summoning all clan members to come together in defence of their lands, Cleland replied with the following:

"We are faithful subjects to King William and Queen Mary, and enemies to their enemies; and if you, who send those threats, shall make any hostile appearance, we will burn all that belongs to you, and otherwise chastise you as you deserve" (Crichton 1824, 90-1).

Cleland then sent for ammunition and provisions, although he received very little from Colonel Ramsay in Perth. On the 19th August Ramsay did send reinforcements in the form of two troops of horse and three of dragoons with Lord Cardross.

As the Jacobites moved into position around the town, forward parties of Cleland's force were engaged in skirmishing in the days before the battle, including the capture of a small group of Jacobites. On 20 August, Ramsay recalled Cardross to Perth. Initially he refused this order and continued to engage in the ongoing skirmishes around the town, however, with the order repeated in no uncertain terms the night before the battle, Cardross had no choice but to comply.

With the withdrawal of the cavalry, many of the Cameronian's appear to have intended to follow suit. Cleland prevailed upon them to stay with the

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assistance of Alexander Shields, the chaplain. In particular, some of the soldiers were concerned of the presence of the officer's horses, giving them a means of escape while leaving the rest of the regiment behind. To reassure his men this would not happen, Cleland

"...ordered to draw out all their horses and to be shot dead. The souldiers then told them they needed not that pledge of their honour, which they never doubted; and seeing they found their stay necessar, they would run all hazards with them."
(Crichton, 1824)

The next day, the full strength of the Jacobite army appeared on the hills around the town and after Cleland refused an invitation to surrender battle commenced. He had positioned his troops around the town, including at the cathedral, at Dunkeld House, the Cross and in gardens and the park.

Battlefield Landscape

Dunkeld is a highly unusual Scottish battle because it took place in an urban environment, a form of combat which was generally avoided in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Most of the town was burned to the ground during the battle, with only three houses reportedly left standing. When the town was rebuilt the area to the north of the cathedral, which had been occupied by Scots Row - a street which integrated Dunkeld House – was left open, so as to provide an open aspect between the house and the cathedral. Further buildings associated with the cathedral were found to the south, between the river and the cathedral itself, and this area also exists as open ground today.

Location

Dunkeld sits on the northern bank of the River Tay, overlooked by a circle of hills to the north, including Gallows Hill, with lower hills, including Schiochies Hill, closer to the town. The town contained a main street running westward to the Cross and then skirting the southern side of the cathedral (Canon's Houses). Another street (Scots Row) branched north-westward from the Cross, creating a 'Y' shaped street plan. This street integrated Dunkeld House, though this was a free standing structure. Built in 1679 for the Marquess of Atholl, Dunkeld House was an impressive mansion designed by the architect Sir William Bruce. Atholl had been buying up plots of land around this mansion for some years prior to the Battle of Dunkeld, including part of Scots Row and another group of dwellings on the south-west boundary of the town (Hopkins 1986, 183). After the town was destroyed in the Battle of Dunkeld its location was altered, allowing the Marquess an uninterrupted view of the Cathedral.

Terrain

The town occupied the flood plain to the north of the River Tay, at the site of a ford, and later a bridge (to the south of the cathedral). Being hemmed in by the river (which in other locations would have been a blessing to a defending force) and surrounded on all quarters by hills made the town a difficult place to defend, not least because the place lacked a town wall. What the Cameronians did quite successfully was use the built-up environment to their

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advantage, drawing themselves into the core of the town and forcing the Jacobites to advance slowly through the narrow streets. The burning of buildings with men trapped inside added a further unpleasant dimension to an already bitter struggle.

Condition

As previously noted, an interesting feature of the site is that the ground occupied by Scots Row was never redeveloped after the destruction wrought by the battle, with much of the rebuilding taking place to the east. Additionally, Dunkeld House itself was demolished in the early 19th Century, though the stable block and court offices remained extant until after 1858. Tree planting may well have damaged elements of buried archaeology. However, archaeological investigation has confirmed the location of a tower associated with Dunkeld House, as well as roadways, walls and landscaping features (Gondek and Driscoll 2003) and further to this, geophysical and resistivity survey located a possible laundry, a slaughterhouse and granary (Kellog and Jones 2003).

The slopes of Gallow Hill and Shiochies Hill are afforested, with the latter partly landscaped. The houses of the new town of Dunkeld are located to the east of these topographic features.

Archaeological and Physical Remains and Potential

Given that the battle occurred in a built up area, and resulted in the destruction of buildings in an area which, in places at least, has not been redeveloped, it is probable that archaeological evidence remains. Indeed, impact scars from musket fire are visible on the eastern wall of the Cathedral.

According to Blackader's diary, when the Jacobite army fled the town of Dunkeld after their defeat at the hands of the Cameronians, they left "a number of their dead carcasses behind them" (Crichton 1824, 48), though it is likely these dead would have been buried thereafter. The town, which previously lay around the Cathedral, was almost completely destroyed in the battle and a new town was built to the east, a rather convenient location which gave the Duke of Atholl a clear line of sight to the Cathedral from his house. The Cathedral is now semi-ruined and many of the houses are owned by the National Trust for Scotland which rescued them from demolition in 1953 and has restored and preserved the centre of the town. The area occupied by the town at the time of the battle is now an open field and a recent geophysical survey by Glasgow University (Kellog and Jones 2003) revealed that despite intensive foundation robbing there do seem to be traces of the settlement surviving as archaeological features beneath the surface.

Cultural Association

Inventory of Historic Battlefields

The preferred Jacobite tactic of firing one round then charging with swords was unsuccessful in the confined streets of Dunkeld town and the bodies of fallen men hindered the advance. The shock of this plus the requirement to take cover behind walls, a fighting style counter to the warrior virtues held dear by many Highlanders, prompted the Glencoe poet to lament:

“They were not accustomed to stand against a wall for protection, as was done at Dunkeld. The stalwart young men fell..... felled by bullets from cowherds” (Maclean 1939, 316).

Commemoration & Interpretation

It is not clear whether the eventual retreat of the Highlanders was as a result of a lack of ammunition, as Cannon claimed, or whether, as a prisoner commented according to Lt Blackader, the officers’ attempts to force the clans to re-engage were rejected on the basis that their troops no longer wanted to fight against “mad and desperate men”, or “devils”, or whether they were afraid that Lanier would arrive imminently with cavalry reinforcements as commemorated in the song *You're welcome, Whigs, from Bothwell Brigs*, of which the following is one verse:

“You lie, you lust, you break your trust,
And act all kinds of evil,
Your covenant makes you a saint,
Although you live a devil.
From murders, too, as soldiers true,
You are advanced well, boys;
You fought like devils, your only rivals,
When you were at Dunkeld, boys.”

Dunkeld was also memorialized with the other battles of the Jacobite Risings in the writings of Sir Walter Scott, who anonymously wrote his first novel, *Waverley*, as a fictitious tale about the Jacobite Risings of 1745.

The National Trust for Scotland has taken ownership of and preserved many of the houses in Dunkeld and maintains the Ell Shop. A Tourist Information Centre is located at The Cross in the centre of the town, while the area around the town is included in a popular walking route.

There is also a National Trust for Scotland information panel in the grounds of Dunkeld Cathedral, along with a small museum within the Cathedral which provides some information on the battle. Also within the cathedral is a stone commemorating Lt. Col. Cleland.

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Information on Sources and Publications

The battle of Dunkeld is well documented in both primary and secondary sources, though no rigorous modern assessment of the battlefield has been attempted, other than the research for the Inventory of Historic Battlefields presented here. The background to the conflict is recorded in the legal documents of the Privy Council of Scotland. As to reports on the battle action, Lt. Col. Blackader's diary has been published relatively intact by Crichton (1824), General Mackay's account is also recorded in the Privy Council Register. Ballads, poems and novels were written about the engagement, passed on through oral tradition and transcribed by later antiquarians and scholars, though these have most commonly been used to highlight and memorialise the Jacobite cause.

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12 August 1689. Order for Cleland to take Angus regiment from Doune and Dunblane to Dunkeld and await orders. *Register of the Privy Council of Scotland*.3rd Series.Vol 14 (1689-1689), p. 35

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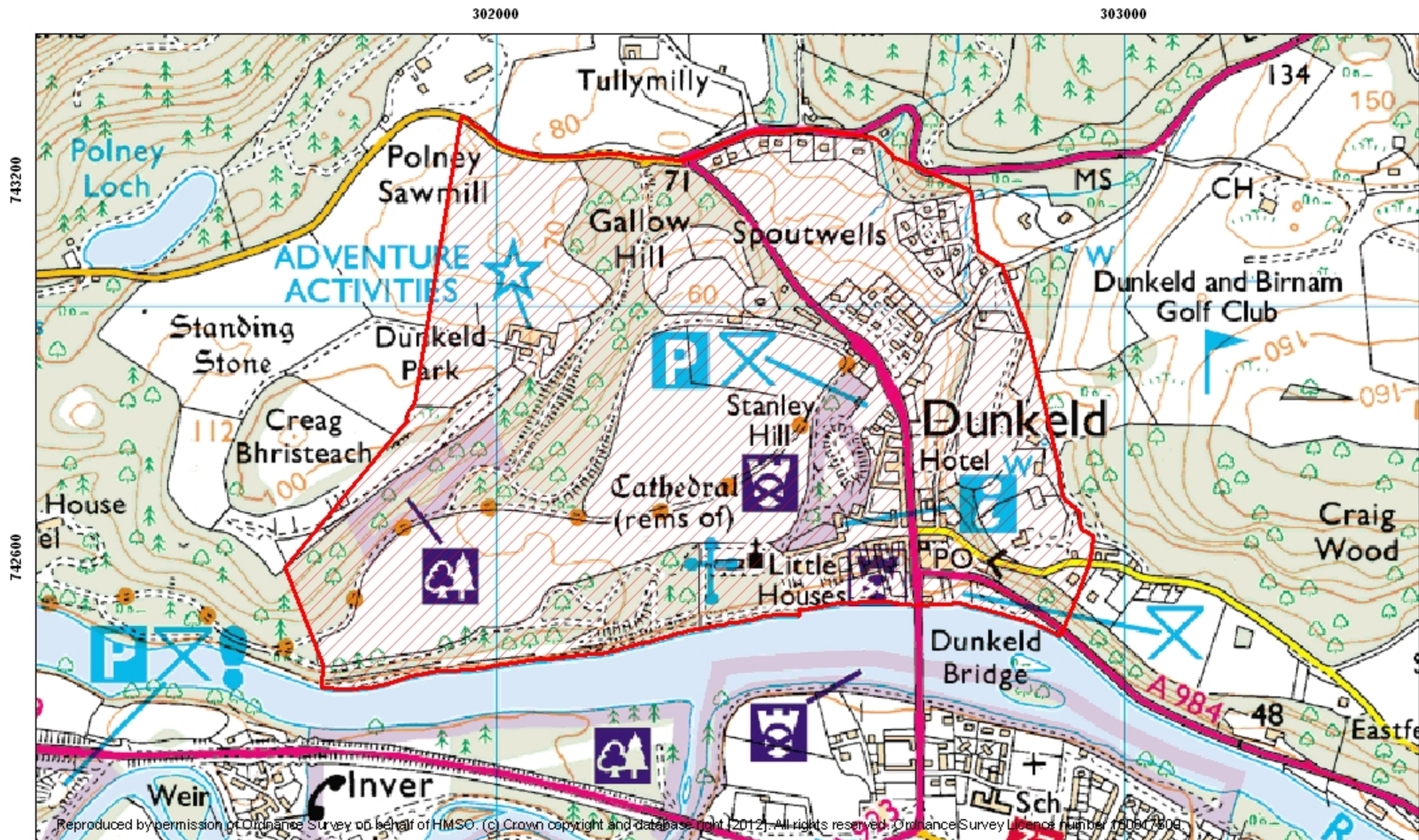
RCAHMS. Dunkeld House. Site Number NO04SW 16.00
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The Inventory of Historic Battlefields - Boundary Map

Dunkeld

21 August 1689

Local Authority: Perth and Kinross



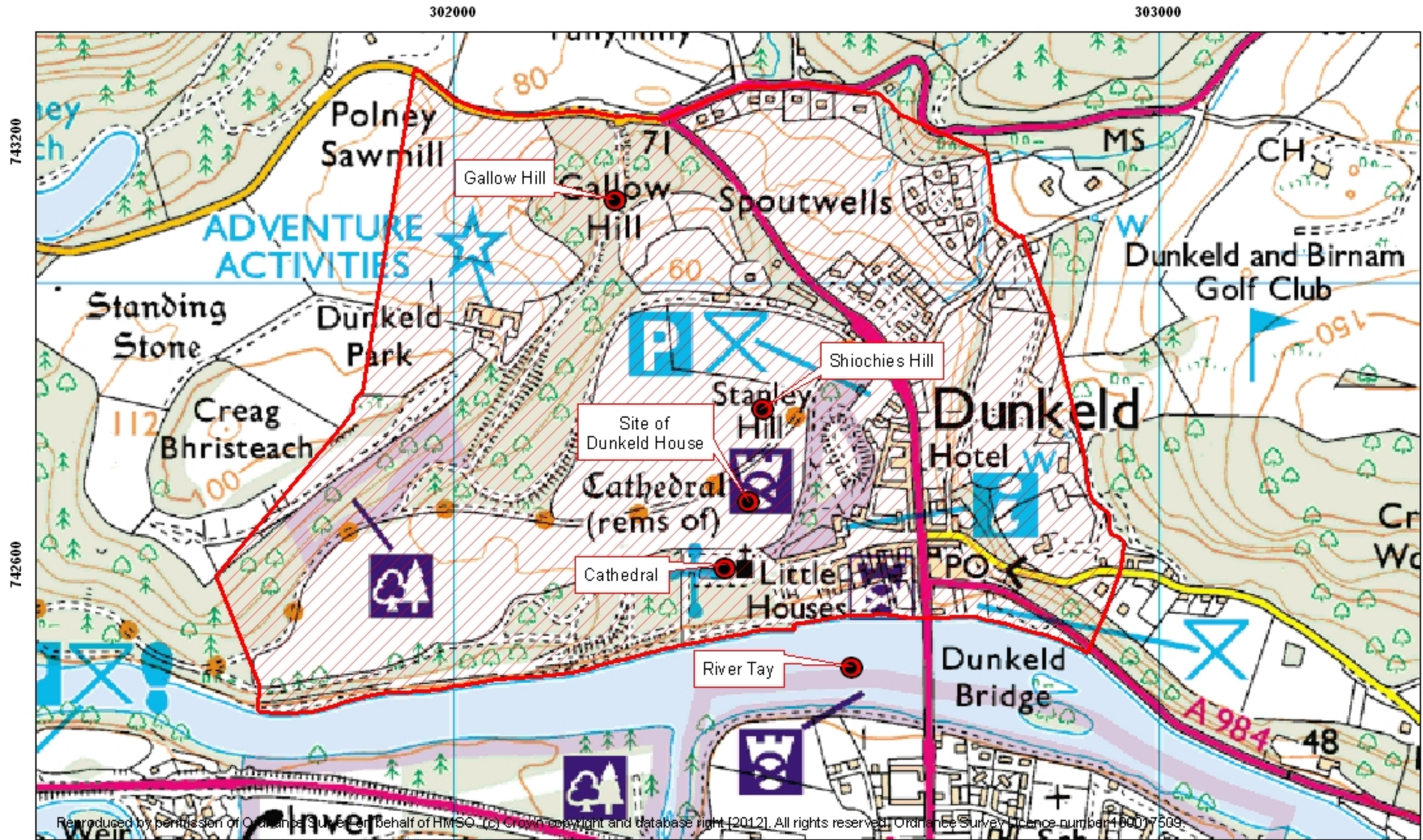
 Inventory of Historic Battlefields boundary

The Inventory of Historic Battlefields - Features


Dunkeld

21 August 1689

Local Authority: Perth and Kinross



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 Inventory of Historic Battlefields boundary

