



The Inventory of Historic Battlefields – Battle of Dupplin Moor

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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DUPPLIN MOOR

Alternative Names: None

10-11 August 1332

Local Authority: Perth and Kinross

NGR centred: NO 039 197

Date of Addition to Inventory: 21 March 2011

Date of last update: 14 December 2012

Overview and Statement of Significance

The Battle of Dupplin Moor is significant as the first battle of the Second War of Scottish Independence. It resulted in a heavy defeat for the Scottish army and the victory brought English ambitions back to Scotland and Edward III now felt able to ignore the Treaty of Edinburgh-Northampton and resumed his attempted subjugation of Scotland. It is also significant in the development of battlefield tactics which the English would make highly successful use of during subsequent battles against both Scotland and France.

The Battle of Dupplin Moor heralded the start of the Second War of Scottish Independence. It was the first attempt of Edward Balliol, son of former King John Balliol, to take the throne of Scotland and restore the lands of the nobles that had been on the losing side at Bannockburn, known collectively as the Disinherited. He was secretly supported by the English King Edward III, both financially and militarily.

The battle was a heavy defeat for the larger Scots army and many of the most significant Scottish nobles died on the field, including the Earl of Mar, the Scottish guardian, leaving Scotland effectively leaderless. Balliol quickly seized the throne and was crowned in September 1332 but fled the country in December due to lack of support.

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.

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The Inventory boundary for the Battle of Dupplin Moor is defined on the accompanying map and includes the following areas:

- The northern slopes of the valley of the Earn. The direction of the advance of the Disinherited and their approach to the plateau.
- The Dupplin plateau. The location of the Scots camp and the scene of the battle. Given the difficulties in placing the fighting precisely the boundary has been widely drawn to incorporate the three main suggested locations.
- The terrain of the slopes and plateau and the views to and from the plateau, over the valley below and up the steep slopes to the summit above. The slope was a key landscape feature in the initial deployment manoeuvres of the Disinherited.

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Historical Background to the Battle

The Disinherited army was led by Henry de Beaumont, a survivor of Falkirk and Bannockburn. The army consisted of around 500 men-at-arms, over 1,000 infantry and archers and 40 German mercenaries. They arrived in Kinghorn in Fife from England by sea, to preserve England's appearance of neutrality and marched westwards towards Dunfermline before turning north for Perth. On 10 August 1332, they reached the River Earn at Forteviot, encountering a large Scottish army under the Earl of Mar, the new guardian, drawn up on the high ground at Dupplin. With the aid of a Scottish sympathiser, Murray of Tulbardine, the Disinherited crossed the river under cover of darkness and attacked what they thought was the Scottish camp, at a place referred to as *Gask* in the sources. However, this was the Scots baggage train and, as dawn broke on 11 August 1332, the Disinherited realised that the Scottish army, consisting of a battle led by Mar and one led by Lord Robert Bruce, the illegitimate son of Robert the Bruce, was untouched and still awaiting them. Estimates of the Scottish army vary between 4,000 and 24,000, but the fact that the army consisted of two battles suggests the lower.

The battle started at daybreak and continued until midday. There are few indications of the precise location of the fighting in the primary sources, but what little information does appear would suggest that the Disinherited were drawn up across the head of a small valley: the *Brut* chronicle, talks of a 'streite passage' that restricted the frontage of the Disinherited to c200 yards (180 m). With a front line of dismounted men-at-arms, the army of the Disinherited was supplemented by archers on both flanks, with the 40 German mercenaries in reserve as a mounted unit. Facing them were two battles of Scots, who were advancing on the Disinherited as the dawn broke. The two battles were separately commanded by Lord Robert Bruce and the Earl of Mar; the two men were not good colleagues, and Bruce is said to have accused Mar of treachery for having allowed the Disinherited to cross the river unopposed. As a result, both men tried to be the first to engage the enemy.

Bruce made contact first, the sheer numbers of his schiltrons pushing the Disinherited back around 30 yards. However, the charge was less effective than it could have been because the schiltrons were not properly organised and cohesive, while the relentless hail of arrows from the archers on the wings meant that the Scots pressed into the centre of the line. As the Disinherited line held, the momentum of the Scots faltered. This need not have been disastrous, but Mar's battalion then came into the fight. Unfortunately, rather than attacking on the flanks, the second battalion was as disorganised as the first and instead came in behind Bruce's men, preventing them from moving backwards. As the arrows rained down on them, the Scots continued to bunch towards the centre, making it virtually impossible to get away, or even to fight. The chronicles record that many of the Scottish casualties were caused through suffocation rather than military wounds, although the troops of the Disinherited were able to stab and shoot any signs of life in the crush.

An organised retreat was attempted by the Earl of Fife, but the men-at-arms on the Disinherited side were able to mount up and turn the retreat into a rout, causing considerable extra casualties as men were cut down as they fled.

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The Armies

The two armies were very different in size and nature. The Disinherited was a small army comprising infantry, men-at-arms and archers. There was also a small group of mounted German mercenaries. The Scottish army, about which there are considerably fewer details, was much larger and was divided into two battalions. They were mainly infantry, and there are no indications of Scottish archers in the sources. All of the Scottish knights were apparently dismounted.

Numbers

Numbers are unclear, other than it seems to be certain that the Disinherited were vastly outnumbered by the Scottish army.

Disinherited: at least 500 men-at-arms and at least 1,000 infantry and archers. 40 German mercenaries.

Scottish: Mixture of men-at-arms, knights, infantry; numbers have been put at anything between 4,000 and 24,000. It is likely that the disparity in numbers was visible as several of the sources talk about Scottish overconfidence and initial low morale amongst the Disinherited.

Losses

The true casualties will never be known, but it seems clear that the Scots casualties were in the thousands, while the Disinherited lost two knights and 33 squires. It was one of the worst defeats suffered by the Scots on home soil. Scottish casualties were divided between the large number that were killed in the main body of the fighting and those who were able to retreat and start to escape the battle, but were cut down as it degenerated into a rout. Certainly there were many leading Scots who fell that day: Lord Robert Bruce, who was an illegitimate son of Robert the Bruce, was killed at the head of the first battalion; the Earl of Mar died with the second battalion; the Earl of Moray, son of the recently deceased guardian; the Earl of Menteith; the High Chamberlain of Scotland; and Sir Robert Keith, who had led the cavalry charge at Bannockburn that had broken Edward II's archers.

The Earl of Fife was a survivor of the battle, and unfortunate enough to be a Scottish participant in the equally disastrous battle of Halidon Hill outside Berwick in 1333, where he was captured.

Action

No further information.

Aftermath and Consequences

The battle was very significant at the time, and it is interesting that it has become a relatively forgotten event. The Scottish Guardian of the time was

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killed, and the infant King of Scots, David II, had to be taken out of the country as a usurper took the throne in his place. The new king brought back nobles whose lands had been taken by others, dispossessing them in their turn, and also demanded submission to his rule on pain of forfeiture. The victory of the Disinherited brought English ambitions back into Scotland, as Edward III was able to reverse the Treaty of Edinburgh-Northampton; Edward Balliol was later to cede his right to the Scottish crown to Edward III, while the capture of David II as an adult at the Battle of Neville's Cross in 1346 gave Edward control over Scotland for a while.

Militarily, the battle has tremendous significance as the precursor of the English successes in France during the Hundred Years' War. The tactics that wrought such destruction against the French chivalry at Crécy in 1346 were used first against the Scots at Dupplin Moor, and refined at Halidon Hill in 1333. It was the combination of archers on the wings, providing both arrow storms and cross-fire, and a strong defensive position held by the men-at-arms and dismounted knights that proved to be so effective. The Disinherited were at the head of a small valley, which meant that it was difficult to outflank them; the topography created severe difficulty for the opposing army. At Dupplin Moor, it was the narrowing of the valley that forced the schiltrons to bunch in the centre; at Halidon Hill, it was an area of boggy ground, followed by a slope up to the English position; at Neville's Cross, it was a series of hedges and burns that broke up the formations; at Crécy, it was a slope and a series of man-made obstacles.

The relatively low significance of the battle today probably relates to the outcome of the Second War of Independence. For Scots, it was a terrible defeat that has nothing to recommend its commemoration. Flodden is remembered for the loss of the king and for the tremendous loss of life; although several important figures fell at Dupplin Moor, none was of the stature to be remembered today, largely because they died before they had a chance to imprint themselves upon the course of Scottish history. For the English, there is little to recommend the battle. It was a private initiative, fought in Scotland by a small army in the interests of a 'foreign' king. Although it was a crushing victory, its success had been counteracted in less than a year, and the other major battles of the Second War of Independence were fought in England at Halidon Hill and at Neville's Cross in County Durham. It is interesting to note that the contemporary impact in England of Halidon Hill in 1333 was far greater, even although the victory could hardly have been more comprehensive than at Dupplin Moor. That event was commemorated by poems and writing in a way that Dupplin Moor was not.

Events & Participants

The Second War of Independence (1332–1357) was a protracted period of campaigning by Edward Balliol and the other anti-Bruce nobility (the Disinherited), to regain the lands and honours lost to them after the Battle of Bannockburn. In pursuit of their claims, the Disinherited mustered an army with the tacit support of the English crown and invaded Scotland; after Dupplin Moor, they returned several times but now openly on behalf of Edward III. These campaigns were militarily successful, but were transitory because of a

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lack of support within Scotland itself. The Second War of Independence was ultimately unsuccessful for Balliol and the Disinherited, with Balliol ceding his claim to Edward III on January 20, 1356.

Figures of national significance involved in the Battle of Dupplin Moor include Edward Balliol, the son of King John Balliol; Lord Robert fitz Bruce, illegitimate son of Robert the Bruce; Sir William Keith, Great Marischal of Scotland; and the Earl of Mar, then Protector of Scotland. Bruce, Keith and Mar were all killed in the battle.

The battle is of national significance because it was the first use of dismounted men-at-arms alongside archers by an English army, a formation that was to prove so successful in future battles against the Scots (e.g. Halidon Hill) and the French (Agincourt). While the later battles are more famous, Henry V certainly owed his victory at Agincourt to the tactics that Henry Beaumont developed at Dupplin Moor. The archers caused the initial damage as the enemy advanced, while the men-at-arms delivered the *coup de grace* as the offensive formations collapsed. This was to bring English success throughout the Hundred Years War.

Context

The Battle of Dupplin Moor was the opening event in the Second War of Scottish Independence, which concerned the attempts of the nobles known as the Disinherited to regain the lands and honours lost to them after the Battle of Bannockburn. The Disinherited tended to be Anglo-Normans with lands on both sides of the border, which was one of the complicating factors in the political relationships between Scotland and England. Prior to Bannockburn, lots of the nobility had feudal ties to both Scottish and English crowns, which caused a conflict of interests. Both sides of the border were faced with having powerful nobles who owed military service to a foreign authority, and whose interests were opposed to those of the Crown. Robert the Bruce attempted to resolve this issue at the Parliament held at Cambuskenneth in November 1314, which declared that all nobles who had chosen to support Edward II, either through their deaths on the English side at Bannockburn or by not having submitted to Bruce at the Parliament, were henceforth deprived of all their lands in Scotland:

“In the year of grace 1314 on the 6th November, with the most excellent prince lord Robert by the grace of God illustrious king of Scots holding his parliament in the monastery of Cambuskenneth, it was agreed, finally adjudged and decided upon this with the counsel and assent of the bishops and the rest of the prelates, the earls, barons and other nobles of the kingdom of Scotland and also of the whole community of the aforesaid realm, that all who died in battle or elsewhere against the faith and peace of the said lord king, or who had not come on the said day into his peace and faith although they were very often summoned and lawfully awaited, be perpetually disinherited from lands and tenements and all other estate within the kingdom of Scotland; and they be held henceforth as enemies of the king and kingdom, forbidden for them and their heirs in perpetuity from all claim of hereditary right or any other right in the future. Therefore in the perpetual memory of this and manifest proof of this

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judgement and statute the seals of the bishops and other prelates, and also of the earls, barons and the rest of the nobles of the said realm are appended to the present ordinance, judgement and statute. (Act of Parliament, 6 November 1314 [NAS: SP13/6])”

The Disinherited gave nominal allegiance to Edward Balliol, son of King John Balliol, and were led by Henry de Beaumont. They were determined to get their lands back, and ostensibly to restore the Scottish crown to John Balliol's son. The death of Robert the Bruce in 1329 and the accession to power of Edward III in England, pushing out the ineffectual regime of his mother Isabella and her lover Roger Mortimer gave them their opportunity. They received support from Edward III of England, partly because of a strong desire to avenge Bannockburn, but more particularly because he saw Scotland as a potential threat in his disputes with Philip VI of France (which developed into the start of the Hundred Years' War). This support was, at least initially, tacit and unofficial because of the Treaty of Edinburgh-Northampton in 1328, which had ceded all claims by the English Crown to the throne of Scotland and which had promised that no English troops would cross the River Tweed.

In pursuit of their claims, the Disinherited mustered armies and invaded Scotland several times. On each occasion, they defeated the Scottish armies sent against them, but were unable to capitalise on their successes, partly because of a lack of support within Scotland itself and partly because they had no real cohesion once the immediate unifier of facing an enemy army had gone. Any hopes of making a permanent return were lost through the settling of scores and taking of revenge, which meant that the Disinherited were never able to command support and loyalty. The Second War of Independence was ultimately unsuccessful for Balliol and the Disinherited, with Balliol ceding his claim to Edward III on January 20, 1356.

Battlefield Landscape

The general location of the battle is well established through primary and secondary sources. However, due to the lack of detail within these sources, the precise location of the fighting is uncertain and a programme of archaeological field work and the recovery of associated artefacts will be required to accurately pinpoint the site of the battle.

Accounts of the battle record that the Disinherited marched north from Dunfermline towards Perth, crossing the River Earn under cover of darkness near Forteviot. They then climbed the steep scarp in front of them up to Dupplin Moor where the fighting took place. The Scottish army had marched down from Perth, and were encamped somewhere on the high ground where the Disinherited could see them; the primary sources record that the mood amongst the Disinherited was grim when they saw the size of the army confronting them. There was a Scottish camp at a place described as *Gaskmoor*, which suggests that it was to the west in the direction of the Gask Ridge. However, this was the baggage train's camp and not the main camp, as the Disinherited discovered when they attacked.

The texts talk about a 'streite passage', where the Disinherited were drawn up across the head of a small valley; this meant that the Disinherited had a

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frontage of only c200 yards to cover in their deployment, with little chance of being outflanked by the larger Scottish army. Several areas have been suggested for this, in particular Dupplin Castle and Cairnie Wood. This latter location, however, does not have any resemblance to a 'streite passage' that would constrict the movement of the Scots and provide protection from flanking for the Disinherited; it would also require the Scots to be marching up from the valley bottom, which does not match the accounts. The Dupplin Castle possibility has a better fit; the castle sits in a small valley running uphill north-west from the scarp; this is relatively narrow and could match the description of the location. However, it is difficult to see how this would work if the Scots camped overnight somewhere on the high ground to the east of the Disinherited. In order to advance on the Disinherited moving roughly east to west, this location would require the Scots to move to a position where they would have to charge uphill.

A more likely location would be higher up on the plateau at Backhill Park, where a dip runs east-west to the south of Windygates Cottage. The sides of this dip are quite high, almost a half-pipe with a flat base and a U-shaped side profile, and would certainly match the 'streite passage' and the likely relative positions of the two armies. Again, the problem with this location is that it also requires the Scots to have attacked uphill.

The direction of the rout is uncertain although it is likely that the Scots fled to the west and north-west along the Gask ridge.

The battle was fought on a plateau above Strathearn to the south-west of Perth. The topography of the steep slope up from the River Earn, which presents a serious obstacle to a manoeuvring army, has remained essentially unchanged; it is still easy to understand on the ground why Lord Robert Bruce was angry that Mar had allowed the English to gain the higher ground without a fight. The overall character of the landscape is sufficiently well preserved to give a good sense of the approach of the Disinherited and their climb to the high ground where the fighting took place. The slope leads up to flatter ground that is suitable for manoeuvring; there are a couple of small lochs on this higher ground, while the area is largely undisturbed flat open moorland. Important views from the Scots position on the plateau out over the valley of the Earn to the approaching Disinherited army survive intact.

There has been relatively little development in the area and the rural nature of the valley and the plateau is well preserved. The landscape around Dupplin Castle has changed since the time of the battle with the addition of agricultural land and forestry on the high ground to the west making it impossible to see the open moorland of the plateau from the top of the scarp. It is also probable that other key locations, such as the position of the Scottish camp, has been covered by the forestry and will be difficult to find.

Location

There are two locations that have been suggested as the location of the battle. The first is on the edge of the scarp above the River Earn, close to Dupplin Castle; this is the location suggested by the link with the Dupplin Cross. The second location is at Cairnie Wood, roughly 2 km to the east and

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again on the edge of the scarp. Neither is a particularly good match for the primary source descriptions, which require a narrow valley, as this was integral to the successful tactics used. There is a narrow valley in the first location, but this is right beside Dupplin Castle, which is not mentioned in the accounts. Furthermore, the location would require that the Scots were coming up the scarp to attack, which does not fit the accounts at all.

The second location can also be discounted. There is no narrow valley in this location, and it would be easy for the Disinherited to be outflanked. Nor is there anything to cause the Scots to have bunched into the centre. There is nothing to recommend this location at all.

There is a narrow valley that would fit the accounts, which is located further to the north than the current suggestions. This location is centred on NGR NO 038 198, and is the location of an embankment of the A9 through a wooded area on the high ground. Burnside Lodge, belonging to Dupplin Castle, is close by. This is an E-W channel with low but steeply sloping sides, which narrows to the eastern end. It is also much closer to the Gask, which would fit with the location of the Scottish camp followers being at *Gaskmoor*. It is impossible to determine whether this is the correct location, but it does have the required elements to fit the accounts and the tactics used by the Disinherited. The sides of the valley, and the narrowing of the valley, would have pushed the wings of the schiltrons into the centre, bunching the Scots and creating the deadly crush that appears to have been the main cause of the disaster. The steep slopes would have given a great deal of protection to the Disinherited from any flanking moves. The width of the valley would accommodate 500 or so dismounted men-at-arms, while the western end of the valley opens out; this is where the Scots would have started, and it would not have been immediately obvious that the topography was a funnel for them. It must be emphasised, however, that the proposal of this location is only tentative in the absence of any supporting evidence from fieldwork.

Terrain

The general area of the battle is a plateau above Strathearn, to the south-west of Perth. The slope down to the River Earn is quite steep and presents a serious obstacle to a manoeuvring army. The steep slope leads up to flatter ground that is suitable for manoeuvring; there are a couple of small lochs on this higher ground, while the ground is largely flat and open. It is part of the Roman Gask Ridge, which was a network of military installations such as forts and signal stations that provided intelligence on potential threats from the north.

In terms of the action of the battle, the narrow valley identified above would explain the events and results of the fighting. The Scots would advance from the west, marching slightly uphill into a narrowing defile that caused the troops to bunch together. The archers of the Disinherited were firing arrows down onto targets below their position and in an enfilading fire, as they were on the flanks of the Disinherited army. If this location is the correct one, it is clear to what extent the terrain played a role in the battle; rather than being

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deterministic, it is evidence of the tactical brilliance of the Disinherited, who were battle-hardened veterans.

Condition

The condition of the battle is difficult to assess because the precise location of the battle is uncertain. Any statements are therefore about the general area, as the general location is reasonably well-known.

The Dupplin Estate covers part of the potential battlefield area, particularly if the Scots fled to the west and north-west. Some of the rout might then have taken place within the boundaries of the estate. Consequently, it is possible that landscaping of the estate has had an effect on the survival of the battlefield. There has been some forestry in the area, which may have damaged parts of the battlefield. However, forestry is only a small part of the land-use pattern; the slope up from the River Earn has been used as agricultural land, and is currently cultivated. To the north of the forestry, up on the plateau, the land is mainly cultivated as well. General Roy's map from the mid-18th century indicates that this was the case at that stage, so it is reasonable to assume that the overall land-use has not changed much since that date, and it is unlikely that the forestry was more extensive in the past.

Archaeological and Physical Remains and Potential

There are a number of records of Medieval artefacts being found in the general area of the battle. There is a 19th century record of weapons associated with the battle being recovered on the Dupplin Estate, but the artefacts are no longer extant and their provenance unproven. A copper alloy pendant from a horse of Sir William Keith's retinue was recovered by a metal detectorist within the vicinity of the battlefield in 2007 and reported to Perth Museum and Art Gallery (DES 2007, 156). The vague four figure grid reference for the find places it to the south-west of Forteviot, which is on the valley floor, and thus well away from the high ground above the scarp, where the fighting most probably took place.

Given the 14th century date of the battle it is likely that any ferrous material associated with the battle will be poorly preserved and difficult to locate. Given the cramped nature of the main battle there may be non-ferrous personal items located within a fairly confined area on the battlefield. As a large number of the Scots were killed during the battle the potential for graves within the defined area is high.

Cultural Association

The battle of Dupplin Moor has very limited cultural associations and has left no trace in popular culture. There are no traditional songs or poems about the battle and no on-site commemoration or interpretation. The lack of popularity of this highly significant battle may relate to the fact that it was a terrible defeat for Scotland in a campaign that was ultimately unsuccessful.

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Commemoration & Interpretation

There is a folk/death metal song about Dupplin Moor by Scottish folk metal band Alba gu Bràth.

The Dupplin Cross was said to stand on the site of the battle, but it pre-dates the battle and is not a commemoration of the events; it no longer stands in the grounds of Dupplin Castle, where it was recorded in 1769 by Thomas Pennant, but instead is inside St Serf's Church in Dunning on the floor of the valley.

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Full Bibliography

Information on Sources and Publications

The majority of the sources are English, and are the work of churchmen not present at the battle; the Scottish accounts are similarly by clerics. They are all later than the battle and none is in any way an eyewitness account. This is one of the reasons for the low level of information provided, as the purpose of the accounts was more about the larger implications of the battle than the details of the battle itself. It means that all of the accounts are suspect, and there is little of the detail about numbers that can be considered reliable. There was a purpose in inflating the numbers of the dead, and in exaggerating the disparity between the two armies. The battle is mentioned reasonably often in works relating to the Hundred Years' War, because of the importance of the tactics that were first employed at Dupplin Moor. However, this is the only real interest taken in the battle by the secondary sources. It acts very much as a footnote in the history of the Plantagenets, perhaps appropriately as theirs was a hidden hand at the time.

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No further information.

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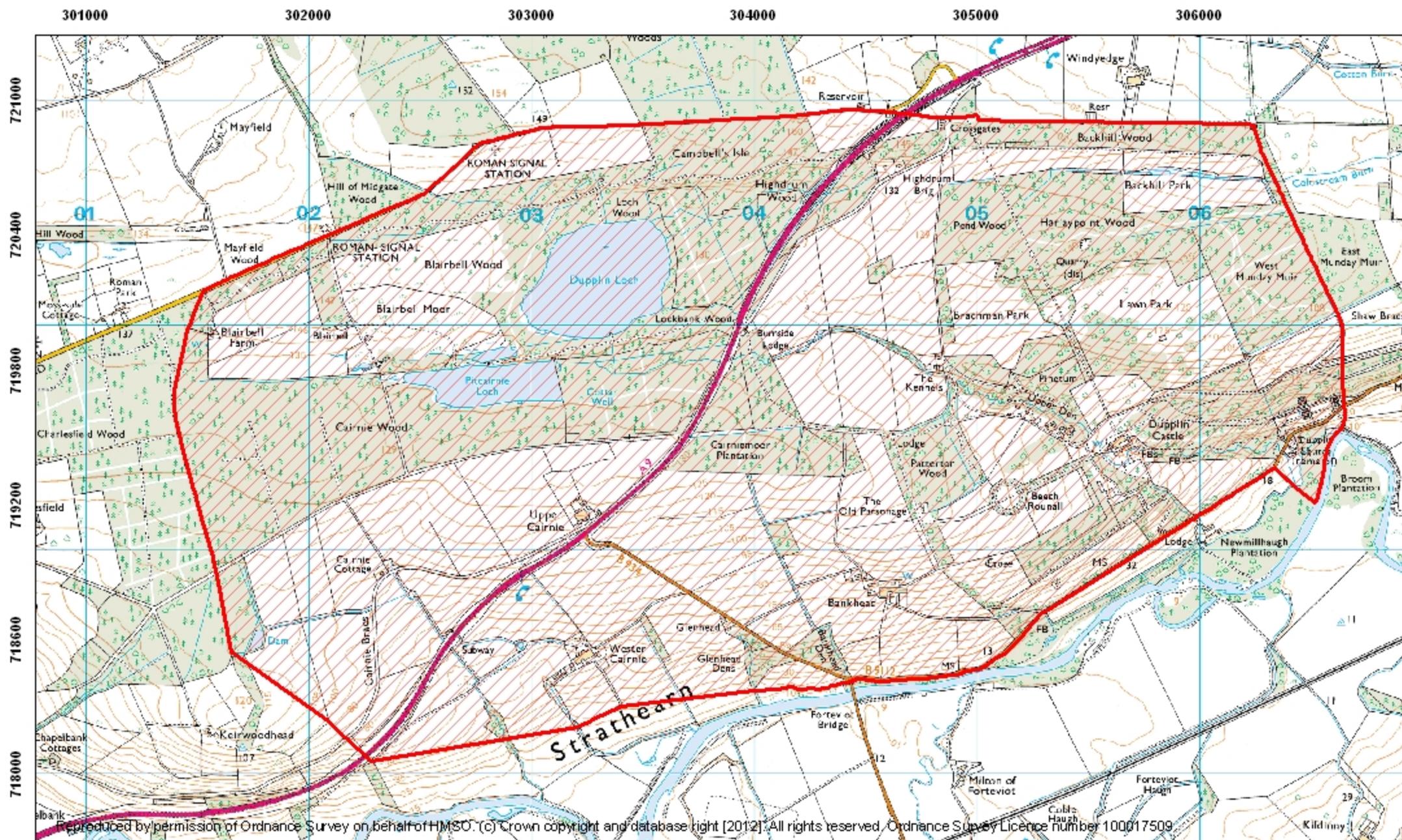
Strickland, M. & Hardy, R . 2005 *The Great Warbow: From Hastings to the Mary Rose.*: Sutton Publishing, Stroud.

The Inventory of Historic Battlefields - Boundary Map

Dupplin Moor

10-11 August 1332

Local Authority: Perth and Kinross



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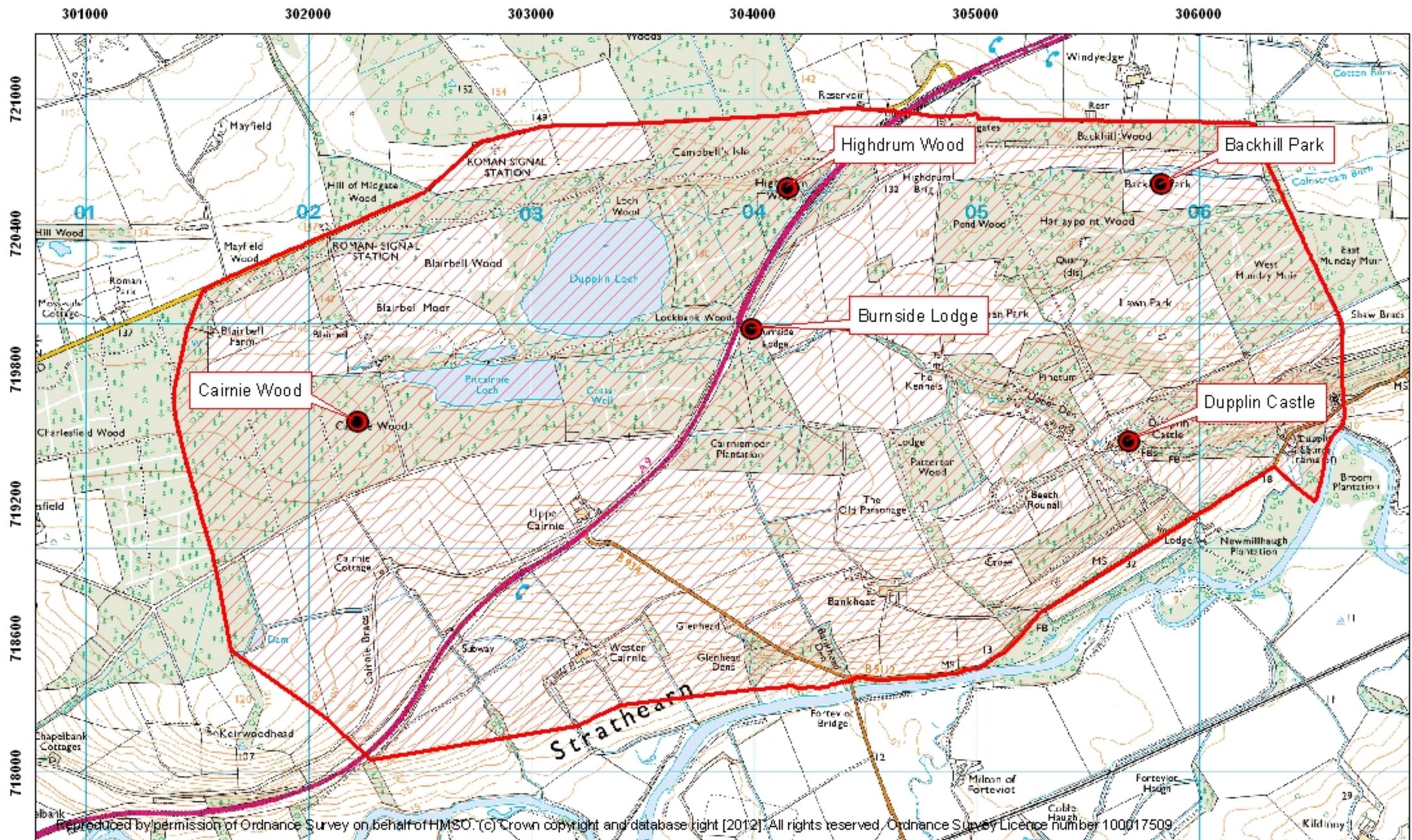


The Inventory of Historic Battlefields - Features

Dupplin Moor

10-11 August 1332

Local Authority: Perth and Kinross



 Inventory of Historic Battlefields boundary



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