

# Inventory of Historic Battlefields

## ANCRUM MOOR

27 February 1545

Local Authority: Borders

NGR centred: NT 623 267

### Overview

The Battle of Ancrum Moor was part of Henry VIII's campaign known as the Rough Wooing. The objective was to force the Scots to accept a marriage between Henry's son Edward and the infant Mary, Queen of Scots. While raiding in the Borders, the English army was attacked by a Scottish force at Ancrum Moor, just outside Jedburgh. The English were defeated in the battle and suffered heavy losses, including the deaths of two senior commanders.

The victory of the Scottish force ended the English raiding for a time and, in the wake of the defeat, France sent troops to help the Scots attack England. However, in the event no major campaign was launched, as the Scottish Regent, the Earl of Arran, feared provoking the English king into further attacks. In the longer term, the defeat at Ancrum Moor ultimately led Henry to escalate his military action against Scotland, culminating in the catastrophic defeat of Scottish forces after his death at the Battle of Pinkie in 1547.

### The Battle

The English army consisted of 3,000 mainly German mercenaries, 1,500 English Borderers and 700-800 Scottish 'assured men' (Borderers who had sworn allegiance to the English crown). They had been at Melrose and were on their way back south towards Jedburgh. Having seen a small Scottish cavalry troop moving from Peniel Heugh hill back to the north-west, the English army turned back to pursue them. The English appear to have been divided into two battles. The vanguard was led by Layton and consisted of around 2,000 spearmen, hagbutters (men carrying a portable long-barrelled gun) and archers. The second battle was led by Eure and consisted of around 3,000 men. Both battles had spears in the centre and one wing of archers, the other of hagbutters. What they did not know was that the Scots comprised a force of around 2,500 men including Fife lances and Border Reivers, accompanied by cannon.

The English attacked uphill, thinking that they were attacking a small body of cavalry. However, the main Scottish army came over the brow of the hill and pushed the vanguard back into the rest of the English army. As the situation deteriorated for the English army, the 'assured men' ripped off the red crosses that marked them out and attacked the English troops as well; this betrayal by the 'assured men' was subsequently blamed as the key factor for the English defeat. The English lines collapsed and a rout began. Both Layton and Eure were killed, along with up to 800 of their army; prisoners were numbered at around 1,000.

### Events & Participants

The battle involved the Scottish Regent, James Hamilton Earl of Arran, and Archibald Douglas Earl of Angus. Arran was next in line to the Scottish throne after Mary, and was instrumental in negotiating the betrothal of Mary to Francis, the French dauphin.

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Angus was another very powerful figure in 16<sup>th</sup> century Scotland. He was the victor at the Battle of Linlithgow Bridge in 1526, one of the guardians of James V and the brother-in-law of Henry VIII. In contrast to Arran, Angus had been a consistent supporter of the English faction to the point that he had been forced into exile at the English court by James V. In 1542, with the death of James, Angus was able to return to Scotland and led the negotiations to betroth Mary to Henry's son Edward. Angus and Arran were bitter rivals, but they found themselves in an uneasy alliance after the start of the Rough Wooing. The pillaging undertaken by Edward Seymour, Earl of Hertford, included Angus' lands, turning him against the English.

The English army was led by Sir Ralph Eure and Sir Brian Layton. Eure (sometimes Evers in the sources) was the Warden of the English Middle March, while Layton was governor of Norham Castle, an important border garrison. In 1544 they had led a raid into Scotland that had included the burning of Melrose Abbey and the consequent destruction of Douglas family tombs, earning a personal enmity from Angus.

The battle is notable as being one of the few examples where archery and firearms were used together. Arquebuses (portable long-barrelled guns, also known as hagbutts) were used in comparatively large numbers for the period, and the battlefield has a high research potential for assessing the use of the two forms of projectiles in parallel. It is also notable because it is a rare example of Border warfare, most of which has survived only in historical sources and Border ballads. This is one of the few occasions where a raid ended in a confrontation between armies in a pitched battle that will have left traces in the landscape.

### Physical Remains & Potential

Various stray finds of armour and equipment are known from the general area, found in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the south-west of Ancrum Moor; an example is the discovery of a 'burgonet', a type of 16<sup>th</sup> century helmet, found on the slopes near to the River Ale. However, these are away from the battlefield and cannot be assumed to relate to the fighting, though they may represent the rout. There are no records of human remains being discovered, but there were significant numbers of dead on the English side; there is thus a possibility of human remains being encountered in the area.

The sources indicate large numbers of hagbutters on the English side, so a substantial number of lead bullets will have been fired. In addition, the English seem to have had a substantial number of archers, perhaps as many as 1,000, and there are potentially large quantities of ferrous arrowheads that could be recoverable through archaeological investigation. The Scots appear to have used cannon, as there is a reference to two Scots being killed by their own artillery. The English may also have used cannon, as one of the sources states that the Scots captured some artillery pieces as the English fled. This means that there may be round shot (a spherical solid projectile without explosive charge, fired from a cannon for long range targets) or case shot (a thin metal case containing a large number of bullets or small projectiles used in close range warfare), depending on how close the English were to the Scottish cannon.

Lilliard's Stone, a c.18<sup>th</sup> century stone slab commemorating the death of a young woman in the battle, is the closest to a personal memorial that exists, though its historicity is doubtful.

Although there is mention in some sources that the Scots dug pits to ensnare the cavalry, it is highly likely that this tale was borrowed from the Bannockburn story.

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## Cultural Association

Lilliard's Stone or the 'Maiden's Tomb' located at Lillard's Edge is the only commemorative monument associated with the battle. The inscription on the slab, which tells the tale of a girl who supposedly fought and died in the battle, is likely to be a later and erroneous association. The story of the Maiden Lillard first appeared in written form in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, marking a nationalist mood that was apparent in some circles during the period of the Jacobite risings. The tale has however given the battle a degree of prominence and longevity because of this 'Boudicca of the North'. In 1995 an orchestral suite entitled *Lilliard* was composed by a local music teacher about the battle and the Maiden Lilliard to mark its 450th anniversary.

Beyond this, there are no other indicators of the cultural impact of the battle, but this should not be taken as an indication that the cultural impact of the battle was slight. Certainly in the Borders, the battle had a resonance as a rare occasion that English raiders were defeated and that death and destruction was on the other side.

## Battlefield Landscape

While there are fairly detailed accounts of the fighting, there is less useful detail about the landscape of the battle. Ancrum village lies to the south of the battlefield, below the scarp slope that leads to Ancrum Moor. The Scots seem to have appeared to the English on Peniel Heugh, but then retreated to the north-west. The English pursued but were held up trying to cross Sandy Causeway, which must have been a narrow causeway across boggy ground, though its precise location is unknown. The English advance would have been north-west towards Lilliard's Edge, a scarp leading down into the bowl of Tweeddale. The primary sources suggest that the main bulk of the Scottish army were out of sight below Lilliard's Edge, and that Evers and Layton had no idea that there was more than a small cavalry troop of Scots.

The battle was fought on the undulating moorland of Ancrum Moor. Ancrum Moor is located in a depression on a high plateau overlooking the Ale Water to the south and the Tweeddale to the north. The northern scarp of the plateau (Lillard's Edge) falls steeply into the river valley of the Tweed. Although the landscape of the moor has been dramatically altered through the drainage of marshland and enclosure, key landscape features and views are largely intact and it appears that the overall character of the battlefield survives. The topography of the moorland, which must have played a key role in the battle, is well preserved as open farmland and the spatial relationships between key landscape features such as the summit of Peniel Heugh, the line of the Roman road through the moorland and the undulating terrain of the landscape survive intact. Important views such as those from Lillard's Edge looking over Tweeddale to the north are intact and provide the same outlook as it would have done in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

The defined area is presently mainly farmland with small areas of forestry plantation. The A68 bisects the battlefield and may have impacted on physical evidence.

## 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 the position of camps or vantage points. Although the landscape has

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changed to some extent since the time of the battle, key characteristics of the terrain at the time of the battle can 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 Ancrum Moor is defined on the accompanying map and includes the following areas:

- The summit of Peniel Heugh hill where the Scots first appeared to the English.
- The land to the north and east of Dere Street. The probable location of the advancing Scots after their descent from Peniel Heugh
- The line of the modern A68 and the Roman Road of Dere Street. The two possibilities for the 'Jedburgh Road' which the English marched down.
- An area to the south of the modern A68 which follows the outline of the largest portion of Ancrum Moor identified on 18<sup>th</sup> century estate maps. This area fits the topographic descriptions of the main battleground.
- The well preserved landscape characteristics of the battlefield including the plateau of Ancrum Moor, the views north over Tweeddale from the English vantage point at Lillard's Edge, views across the open moorland from the summit of Peniel Hill and the spatial relationship between the moor and the Roman Road of Dere Street.

### Relevant Publications

Cooper, J. 2008 *Scottish Renaissance Armies, 1513-1550*. Osprey Publishing, Oxford.

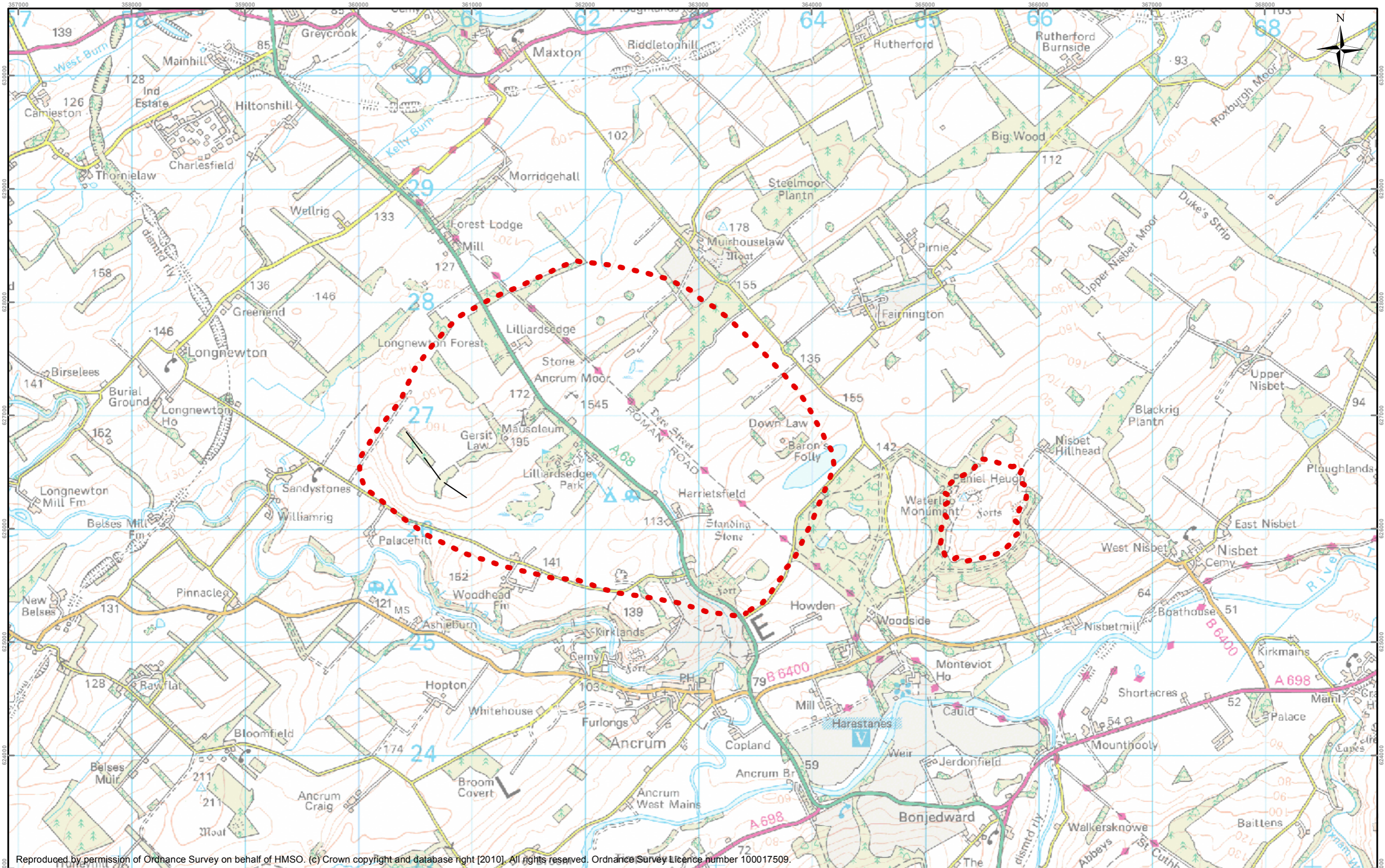
Matthews, R. 2003 *England versus Scotland*. Leo Cooper, Barnsley.

Merriman, M. 2000 *The Rough Wooings: Mary Queen of Scots 1542-1551*. Tuckwell Press, East Linton.

Phillips, G. 1999 *The Anglo-Scots Wars, 1513-1550: a military history*. Boydell Press, Woodbridge.

Ridpath, G. 1848 *The Border History of England and Scotland*. T. Cadell *et al*, London.

Robson, J. 1897 *Border Battles and Battlefields*. J. & J. H. Rutherford, Kelso.



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..... Inventory Boundary

0 250 500 Metres

# BATTLE OF ANCRUM MOOR

## 27th February 1545

Scottish Borders  
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