

Battle Name:	Pinkie	Council area: E Lothian
Date:	10 th September 1547	
UKFOC number:	280	

PINKIE

1 SUMMARY

1.1 CONTEXT

Attempts by the English to link the two kingdoms, of England and Scotland, through the marriage of the young queen Mary of Scotland and prince Edward (later Edward VI) of England collapsed into open conflict in 1544-5. This was halted by the treaty of 1546, but the Duke of Somerset, now effectively ruling England during the minority of Edward VI, simply used the cessation to prepare for war. This time he planned a major land campaign to secure territory, not simply a major raid for these had always previously failed to achieve any long term success for either side. When the last two English strongholds north of the border were reduced by French naval intervention, Somerset's plans were not disturbed. The army was mustered at Berwick and from there, in early September, it crossed the border, marching north on the main east coast route, supported and supplied by the English fleet. At the same time, as a diversionary tactic, a smaller force of about 2500 had been assembled at Carlisle, feigning a major west coast invasion. In response the Earl of Arran mustered northern Scottish forces at Edinburgh and the troops from the south at Falla, about 15 miles to the south east of the capital. From there he could respond to either a cross country or a coastal advance by the English army. Once aware of the English route, Arran marched north to block their approach at the crossing of the Esk near the coast at Musselburgh. The Scottish horse skirmished with Somerset's army as they advanced past Dunbar then, riding along the hills to the south, they flanked his advance.(6)

1.2 ACTION

The Scottish camp was established on the west side of the river Esk, controlling the bridge by which the coast road to Edinburgh crossed the Esk, immediately west of Musselburgh. A turf defence was constructed to protect the camp from artillery fire from the English fleet, which sat immediately off the coast in support of Somerset's army. The right, southern flank of the camp was protected by marshland with the river Esk itself to the east. On the 9th September the English approached from the east and camped at Prestonpans. A detachment of cavalry were sent out to dislodge the Scottish horse from Falside Hill to the south west, which overlooked the coastal plain at Musselburgh. The Scots were driven off and, in a pursuit for several miles, up to 800 were taken. This severely weakened a Scottish army already short of cavalry, whereas the English lost as few as 100. Now, with control of Falside Hill, Somerset had a commanding view of the whole Scottish position and potential battlefield.

The hill upon which Inveresk church lay, close to the river, provided an ideal artillery position for Somerset to bombard the Scottish camp. But as the English forces advanced the Scots countered by crossing the Esk. Caldwell has their main battle crossing south of

Inveresk with other troops using the bridge on the main road to the north. Scottish artillery were mounted by the church to command the battlefield and the three Scottish battles deployed side by side to the south east, though they were severely weakened in cavalry which should ideally have supported both wings.

The three English battles advanced with archers on the left and hagbutters on the right of each. (The hagbut was a type of arquebus, a precursor of the musket). The baggage train was taken around to the south to the safety of Falside Hill and a large detachment of cavalry sent forward to delay the Scottish advance while the rest of the army deployed. It is suggested that the English forces may not have had time to fully deploy their three battles in battle array before the armies engaged, but this was not to affect the outcome.

As the main action began, the English cavalry attack was driven off by the Scottish pike formations, tending to contradict Caldwell's assessment that the Scots were ineffective in their use of pike because they were not a well trained professional army. At the same time the ordnance with both armies began an artillery exchange. In response the English artillery not deployed within the battle array were attacked by a detachment of the few remaining Scottish cavalry, but successfully drove them off. Then, as the Scottish battle array advanced to within bowshot, they were met by artillery fire from pieces deployed within the main battle and by small arms fire from a forlorn hope. This forlorn hope comprised the professional hagbutters, who had been deployed forward of the three English battles. Under this fire, and before the two sides came to hand to hand fighting, most of the Scottish formations appear to have disintegrated. Though some troops may have retained their battle array and made a fighting retreat, the majority fled back towards Dalkeith, to the south west, with the English in pursuit. The Scottish army was severely mauled in the pursuit and 'execution'.

Figure 1: Pinkie (1547) - battlefield plan

Figure 2: Pinkie geology

Figure 3: Pinkie threats

1.3 TROOPS

The English infantry were equipped with bills and pikes, the latter now probably dominant in the English army; the shot was probably mainly longbows but with a significant number of infantry carrying firearms ('hagbutts'), the latter possibly mainly foreign mercenaries. The cavalry would have been mainly armed with lance and sword. The Scottish infantry was equipped with pikes, supported by a few thousand archers but with few if any troops with firearms. Both armies were organised in the standard three 'battles'. Caldwell gives a detailed discussion of the army composition and troop numbers.(6)

Numbers:

(Unless otherwise specified the numbers are from Caldwell).

English: 15,000 – 19,000. Patten states 18,200 troops.

Cavalry: 2000 light horse; 3000 men at arms; 200 Spanish mounted ‘hagbutters’

Infantry: 11,000 English; 600 mercenary ‘hagbutters’; 1400 pioneers

Artillery: 15 field pieces

Scots: probably circa 22-23,000 (according to Huntley, a Scottish commander); Patten claims 31,500;

Infantry: including 4000 highland archers

Cavalry: possibly 1500 light horse

Artillery: 25-30 field pieces

Losses:

Scottish: Claims of up to 15,000 Scots killed seem (5). Huntley’s figure of 6,000 is more reasonable but still high. 500-2000 captured.

English: possibly 500-600.

1.4 COMMEMORATION & INTERPRETATION

No on site commemoration or interpretation relating to the battle has been identified in this review

2 ASSESSMENT

2.1 LOCATION

There is reasonable consistency between secondary sources in the general location of the initial deployments and of the action but there significant uncertainty about the exact placing of events. Caldwell shows the main action south east of Howe Mire but the frontages are far too small, compared to other secondary studies while this location does not accord with the discovery of apparent battle archaeology to the east of the former mire. Thus considerable uncertainties remain as to exactly where on the plain to the south of Musselburgh each particular element of the action took place.

The battlefield can be crudely defined with a secure boundary of the Esk on the west, to the south east Falside Hill provides a boundary, while Musselburgh gives a northern boundary. However here we have defined a wider search area for landscape reconstruction.

In the light of the development threats it should be noted that, as with the plans accompanying all the level I reports, the deployments shown on the battle plan accompanying this report are only intended to be broadly indicative. They should not be taken as an attempt to accurately locate deployments and action which requires detailed analysis of historic terrain and primary sources.

2.2 PRIMARY SOURCES

A number of primary accounts are listed by Phillips, while Caldwell provides an excellent brief assessment of, and references to, the sources. Of these Patten's account of 1548, written by someone present with the English army, is the most comprehensive; another by Berteville who was also present with the army; one by an unnamed Englishman probably present is preserved in the British Library; a French report in Latin written after 1549 draws heavily upon Patten. There are also several lesser reports, including one of importance because it draws upon the views of the Scottish commander. There are also assessments by various 16th century historians.

The surviving contemporary sequence of battle prospects are probably the earliest surviving detailed battle 'plans' from Britain. The main set is in the Bodleian Library, first reported upon by Oman.⁽⁸⁾ One of these five phase plans is reproduced in (4) and phase four of the sequence in (6). These drawings are the source of a probable 16th century print in the National Army Museum, published in (9). Another copy of the latter may be that in the British Library, which their catalogue dates to very soon after the battle. A third plan is that from Patten's report, also reproduced in (6). There are only a handful of British battles with similar detail of deployment and action in graphic form, all for later battles. Pinkie is very unusual in having three separate versions, two of them apparently quite independent.

2.3 SECONDARY WORKS

According to Caldwell the best earlier accounts are by Sir Charles Oman, Sir James Fergusson and W K Jordan. The two short modern studies of the battle by Phillips and by Caldwell have superseded these. The latter is one of the best short discussions of any Scottish battle, well referenced and making extensive use of primary sources. It is the essential starting point for any study of the battle. A detailed interpretation of the action is also provided by Caldwell in the form of 'block' plans, based especially on the contemporary graphic representations. He also places the events closely within the landscape, though far more supporting evidence is needed for this, while the battle formations shown seem far too small for the numbers of troops engaged, so further weakening the analysis. Indeed, the fact that most of the Scottish troops are said to have fled towards Dalkieth might indicate that his depiction of the alignments of the battle arrays when engaged is not correct. Phillips also provides a coherent account, referencing primary sources, though he locates action onto Falside Hill in later stages of the battle. However he provides no terrain context mapping or reconstruction and does not present copies of the primary sources (5).

2.4 BATTLE ARCHAEOLOGY

A mid 19th century record by the Ordnance Survey locates burial and weaponry finds, comprising large quantities of human bones, pieces of spears, swords, horse-shoes and officers' epaulettes, said to have been found on the eastern side of Howe Mire (7).

2.5 BATTLEFIELD HISTORIC TERRAIN

The marsh identified on Patten's plan, though initially appearing to lie towards Dalkeith, in reality must lie immediately to the west of Inveresk church on the west side of the Esk, for

it also lies fairly close to the Scottish camp on the plan. It seems to be identifiable from an extensive area of alluvium adjacent to the river on Shire Haugh on the BGS mapping. There is no other similar expanse of alluvium upstream towards Dalkieth. Patten also shows the bridge over the Esk, westward of Musselburgh town.

A marsh in the centre of the plain to the south of Musselburgh can be identified from another isolated expanse of alluvium, in the area named as Howe Mire on modern OS Explorer mapping. The latter may prove to have been a significant feature in the battlefield terrain but comprehensive reconstruction of the historic terrain is required to enable effective analysis. Other man made topographical features recorded in the accounts have not been securely located, though Caldwell does suggest the location of both the ditch and the lane, though without providing detailed justification.

2.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BATTLE

Pinkie was the last great battle between the two kingdoms before they became united under the rule of a single monarch. It was a dramatic Scottish defeat but instead of leading to English domination of the military and political situation it resulted in a strengthening of the Franco-Scottish alliance. Somerset failed to capitalise immediately upon the destruction of much of the Scottish army, and failed to reduce the major Scottish garrisons or establish the major forts that he needed to secure the border territories. On the contrary, the defeat led to queen Mary's departure for France and her marriage to the Dauphin to secure the French Alliance, which resulted, in the summer of the following year, in the arrival of a French army. That combined with the pressure of a French assault on Bolougne led the English to finally withdraw and to settle in a treaty of 1550. Thus the battle had long term political significance, but contrary to the successes on the field.

This is likely to have been one of the largest battles fought on Scottish soil, with at least 40,000 troops involved. It is also particularly noteworthy in representing the first effective integrated application in Britain of the key military innovations of the 16th century: the combined use of pike and shot, together with artillery and cavalry. Battlefields of this key transitional period in military practice are very rare in Britain.

2.7 CURRENT STATE OF DEVELOPMENT

On the northern part of the area there is substantial development, as well as a former colliery site that has now been redeveloped extending south from Musselburgh and encompassing Inveresk. On the north east development is also extending from Pinkie Brae and Wallyford. However the majority of the core of the battlefield and all of the area to the south west, remains as fields. Although this is traversed by the mainline railway, has a sewage works on it, and the southern part of the area is cut through by the A1 bypass, there is still enormous potential in the site as the latter disturbances are relatively restricted in extent.

2.8 CURRENT DESIGNATIONS

The undeveloped land on the western part of the area, around Inveresk Church and along the east bank of the Esk, are partly Scheduled and partly within a Conservation Area. The National Trust for Scotland also own a small area of gardens (open to the public) within

Inveresk. The southern edge of the battlefield is partly encompassed within the designed landscape of Carberry, as is the area to the south west, associated with Dalkeith House, though that may not have seen any significant action. Another designed landscape lies on the northern side around Pinkie House, now encompassed by the built up area of Musselburgh. A smaller Scheduled area lies on Falside Hill. There is also an extensive area of SSSI on the coast but this was all below high watermark and thus presumably well outside the battlefield.

2.9 POTENTIAL

Pinkie battlefield offers exceptional potential because of the rarity of battlefield of this period in the UK. It has enormous potential to contribute to battlefield studies generally, despite the limited damage caused by development of various kinds.

There is the opportunity to recovery evidence of artillery fire, particularly if case shot comprising lead or iron bullets or fragments was in use in the close quarter action. There is also the potential for intense fire-fight bullet evidence from the well documented use of 'hagbutts'. If the soil conditions (soil pH) and land use history are not so aggressive as to have destroyed the iron artefacts, this site may allow us to better understand how well iron arrows survive compared to bullets and how well they represent the nature and location of the action compared to the evidence provided by lead bullets. This could be exceptionally important in terms of the study of battle archaeology. Because Pinkie is one of the few battles in the UK where the two were in extensive use together, thus it may provide a way of 'calibrating' the evidence of archery found on earlier battlefields in England.

A detailed study of the battle is clearly needed if the excellent topographical detail in the accounts and illustrations are to be effectively exploited to place the action securely in the landscape. With this there is an exceptional potential for accurate reconstruction of the events in an integration of primary battle history, battle archaeology and battlefield terrain. The battle archaeology that is revealed, if an intensive survey is successful, would be particularly important given the exceptional documentation for the battle as it ought to be possible to correlate the shot-fall in particular with particular formations and elements of the action. Few other sites in the UK offer such a good opportunity for the investigation of battle archaeology and its relationship to the documentary record.

The other exceptional potential that needs to be tested on this battlefield is the possibility of exceptional protection of battle archaeology in the former Howe Mire. Whether in the form of waterlogged deposits or as a burial of a battlefield surface beneath later alluviation or colluviation, there could be unusual preservation. If the latter then it may not be immediately revealed by metal detecting survey and might only be revealed by the disappearance of an adjacent scatter or artefacts when it reaches the alluvial area.

The investigation of the battlefield is clearly urgently required to confirm its potential and to ensure that sufficient accurate information is available to enable the conservation and, where necessary, intensive recording of the battle archaeology and terrain archaeology before it is destroyed by any further development. Such a study requires:

- High quality copies of all the graphic representations of the battle to be made easily accessible as they are an essential resource yet are only generally reproduced in part and at small size.
- All primary sources brought together and a commentary provided to each.
- Detailed historic terrain reconstruction to current best practice
- Mapping of the deployments and action, based on the exceptional sequence of contemporary plans and the written accounts, in relation to that terrain;
- The battle archaeology should be sampled using a systematic methodology that draws upon the lessons of ongoing work at Edgehill, on smaller scale investigations elsewhere in the UK and on battlefield surveys in the USA and elsewhere. As part of any study of the battlefield an early element of the archaeological study should be an assessment as to what metal detecting has already been undertaken in the area and an attempt made to collaborate with metal detectorists who have worked on the site, if any, to recover as complete a picture as possible of the distribution of the finds.

2.10 THREATS

Given the importance of firearms and artillery in this action, and hence the potential for large quantities of bullets deposited on the field, there is a high potential for severe damage to the battle archaeology by treasure hunting or other unrecorded metal detecting.

Of even greater concern, a substantial part of the undeveloped land on the battlefield is under major threat from development from surrounding built up areas in Wallyford, Pinkie Brae and Inveresk. There are active planning applications for large blocks of land within the heart of the potential battlefield. Some areas already have consent and development has started on a small scale. A significant area will have been developed by the end of 2005. Whether it be small scale, piecemeal development or large scale development, it will have a dramatic impact on the battlefield. Any development proposal on the potential battlefield, if not to be immediately refused, should be evaluated. It is of great concern that evaluation has already been conducted on the major block of land at the Barbachlaw Farm site and has failed to find any battle archaeology. It is highly likely that this failure to recover evidence of the battle is a result of the difficulties of battle archaeology rather than the absence of evidence. It is essential that as a matter of urgency the full report of the evaluation be assessed to consider its adequacy in terms of battlefield study. This is not a criticism of the organisation undertaking the work or the curator, but rather a reflection of the failure to date to adequately develop and disseminate the techniques of battle archaeology to the profession. It must also be recognised that because of the nature of battle archaeology, any evaluation of battle archaeology can only be truly effective if conducted with the context of a more extensive study of the whole battlefield, and is carried out to the highest modern standards of battlefield studies.

There is clearly urgent need for detailed support to the planning archaeologist to secure the protection of this battlefield. If requests for refusal of development proposals fail, even if the initial archaeological work may have revealed no battle archaeology, then it is essential

that detailed recording requirements are imposed. These are needed to ensure that the battle archaeology, both the unstratified and any potentially stratified evidence, is recorded to the very best modern practice before destruction, or where it is absent then the genuine absence of evidence is securely demonstrated to ensure no doubts in the future. Any such work on the battlefield must be recognised as likely to need to push the boundaries of battlefield study and to be conducted with the highest level of battlefield expertise.

If one takes the combined importance, potential and level of threat to this site it seems likely that Pinkie is the battlefield in Scotland with the greatest need of urgent action on a large scale.

3 REFERENCES

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- (5) Phillips, Gervase. *The Anglo-Scots wars, 1513-1550 : a military history, Warfare in history*. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1999.
- (6) Caldwell David H. "The battle of Pinkie." In MacDougall, Norman (ed.), *Scotland and war, AD 79-1918* (Edinburgh: Donald, 1991), 61-94, 1991.
- (7) NMRS; Ordnance Survey Name Book 1853; OS 6" map (1855)
- (8) Oman C. W. C. Sir. "The Battle of Pinkie, September 10, 1547. As represented in unpublished drawings in the Bodleian Library." *Archaeological Journal*, no. 90:1 (1933): 1-25.
- (9) Berteville le Sieur, and Constable David. 'Récit de l'expédition en Écosse l'an 1546 (sic), et de la bataille de Muscledburgh ... au roy Edouard VI.' ed. David Constable, *Bannatyne Club*, 10, 1825.

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Patten's report on the campaign is reprinted in Willison, David, and Archibald Constable. *Fragments of Scottish [sic] history*. Edinburgh: printed [by David Willison] for Archibald Constable, 1798.

Plans:

(1) British Library:

'The Englishe victore agaynste the Schottes by Muskelbroghe 1547' : undated print but according to the catalogue probably produced soon after the battle, and before the subsequent English defeat in 1549. It may be another copy of that in the National Army Museum.

(2) Bodleian Library:

Set of 5 manuscript plans of battle phases.

(3) National Army Museum:

Print, probably same as (1) above

(4) Published source:

Plan in Patten's report.

4.2 SECONDARY SOURCES

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