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ARCHAEOLOGISTS RECOVER HUNDREDS OF JACOBITE PROJECTILES IN UNEXPLORED AREA OF CULLODEN

Archaeologists from the National Trust for Scotland and the University of Glasgow have recovered more than 100 projectiles, including lead musket balls and cannon shot, from Culloden Battlefield.

The discoveries were made earlier this month (October) by a team of archaeologists and volunteers led by the Trust's Head of Archaeology Derek Alexander and the University's Professor Tony Pollard.

The battle, fought on 16 April 1746, saw the decisive defeat of the Jacobite army, led by Bonnie Prince Charlie by government forces commanded by the Duke of Cumberland's government army.

The new findings, from an area of the battlefield that had not previously yielded any archaeological discoveries, is fresh evidence from the last battle fought on British soil.

The most striking result from the investigation, which took place between 13-18 October, was the recovery of over 100 projectiles, which included lead musket balls and cannon shot, the latter of which included what is believed to be a three-pound cannon ball fired by the Jacobite artillery.

This collection of artefacts not only proves that archaeology from the battle has survived in this area but, the project leaders believe it has provided evidence for one of the most dramatic episodes in a battle that from beginning to end probably lasted less than an hour.

Professor Tony Pollard said: "We've only had time to make a rapid assessment of our results, but musket balls fired by Jacobite and government troops, including pistol balls fired by government dragoons, likely relate to one of the last actions in the battle. This fight took place between the initial battle lines, at a location where boggy ground slowed the Highland charge, and this in combination with heavy fire from Cumberland's line helped to seal the fate of the Jacobite cause.

"As the Jacobites retreated, a battalion of Irish troops in French service, fighting with the Jacobites, made a brave stand against hundreds of mounted men from Cobham's Dragoons and possibly Kingston's Horse, advancing from the right of Cumberland's line. The job of these horsemen was to cut down the disordered Jacobites, and we have recovered some of the shot fired from their heavy pistols. The Irish troops, numbering about 150 men, under their commander Lieutenant-Colonel Walter Stapleton, blocked this advance and according to an account by Adjutant General John O'Sullivan, one of Bonnie Prince Charlie's senior officers, fired volleys into the approaching cavalry. The red-coated Irish Picquets then found cover behind the walls of Culloden Parks but their

surrender, after suffering heavy casualties, with Stapleton among the dead, was the only alternative to total annihilation. Being regular troops in French service, they were treated as prisoners of war rather than rebels, but none-the-less they suffered the privations of confinement on a prison hulk in the Thames before being repatriated to France in early 1747.

"This valiant action helped thousands of Jacobites get away from the field, but it gets only brief mentions in most of the history books. A more detailed analysis of the artefacts and their distribution pattern will be required before we can make a definitive statement but at present there are no obvious alternative interpretations."

A variety of techniques, including metal detector survey, trial trenching and test pitting were used to examine a portion of the battlefield which, on 16 April 1746, sat between the government and Jacobite lines. This area had failed to produce archaeological material in the past, possibly due to disturbances caused by 19th century forestation, which created acid soils, and tree clearance in more recent times. The area is also boggy, which has provided further challenges for archaeologists.

On the importance of these discoveries to the wider understanding of the battlefield, Derek Alexander said: "We are delighted with the results, especially as the ground we investigated didn't appear to hold out a great deal of promise. Our volunteers did a fantastic job of enhancing our understanding of the battle and the battlefield as it exists today.

"This new evidence adds to earlier findings, which include the scatter of objects related to the hand-to-hand fighting on Cumberland's left, to the south of the present site. We now have a clearer picture of where the various actions that made up the battle took place, and this will assist the National Trust for Scotland in enhancing on-site interpretation and the long-term management of the battlefield. We look forward to bringing the team back together to carry out a more detailed examination of the finds."

Valerie Whistler, the National Trust for Scotland's Estate Manager at Culloden, said: "We were so pleased to welcome Derek, Tony, and our volunteers back to Culloden for another archaeology week this year, and we're thrilled to learn more about what they have found. The explorations were accompanied by public talks, weapons demonstrations and guided tours, and all this work supports our ongoing aims to share the story of this battle, care for the site, and ensure its history is preserved for generations to come."

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Over the last 90 years the Trust has pioneered public access to and shared ownership of some of the most magnificent buildings, collections and landscapes in Scotland. It cares for more than 100 sites, from ancient houses to battlefields, castles, mills, gardens, coastlines, islands, mountain ranges and the plants and animals which depend upon them.

In March 2022 the National Trust for Scotland launched *Nature, Beauty & Heritage for Everyone*, its ten-year strategy which sets out the ambitions of the charity over the coming decade. From speaking up for Scotland's heritage which doesn't have a voice, to improving the lives and wellbeing of people across the country, and responding to the climate and biodiversity crisis, the Trust will build on its work in recent years to grow its impact and conserve and restore more of Scotland's heritage, as it moves towards its centenary in 2031.

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