

Placards replace bloodied swords to save Killiecrankie battlefield from bulldozers

Magnus Linklater

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The famous battle has been immortalised in poems and paintings

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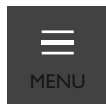


Saved



It was the first great battle of the Jacobite uprising — a stunning and unexpected victory for Highland clansmen led by their charismatic general Viscount Dundee, who defeated a superior government army and cut down 2,000 of its soldiers.

The site on which the Battle of Killiecrankie took place in July 1689 is hallowed ground, one of the most important battlefields in Scotland, a site of special historic interest where swords, scabbards and bullets are still to be excavated.



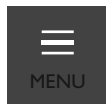
rebellion. Protesters armed with no more than placards, tweeds and some enthusiastic labradors gathered on the site to head off what they describe as a “desecration”.

They say the two stretches of road, with extensive lay-bys, will obliterate the “killing ground” where General Hugh Mackay’s army, its back to the River Garry, turned and fled as the Highlanders — Macleans of Duart, MacDonalDs of Sleat and Glengarry and Camerons of Lochiel — charged from the hill “like one great clap of thunder”, as one historian described it. The battle was immortalised in the Burns poem *The Braes o’ Killiecrankie*.

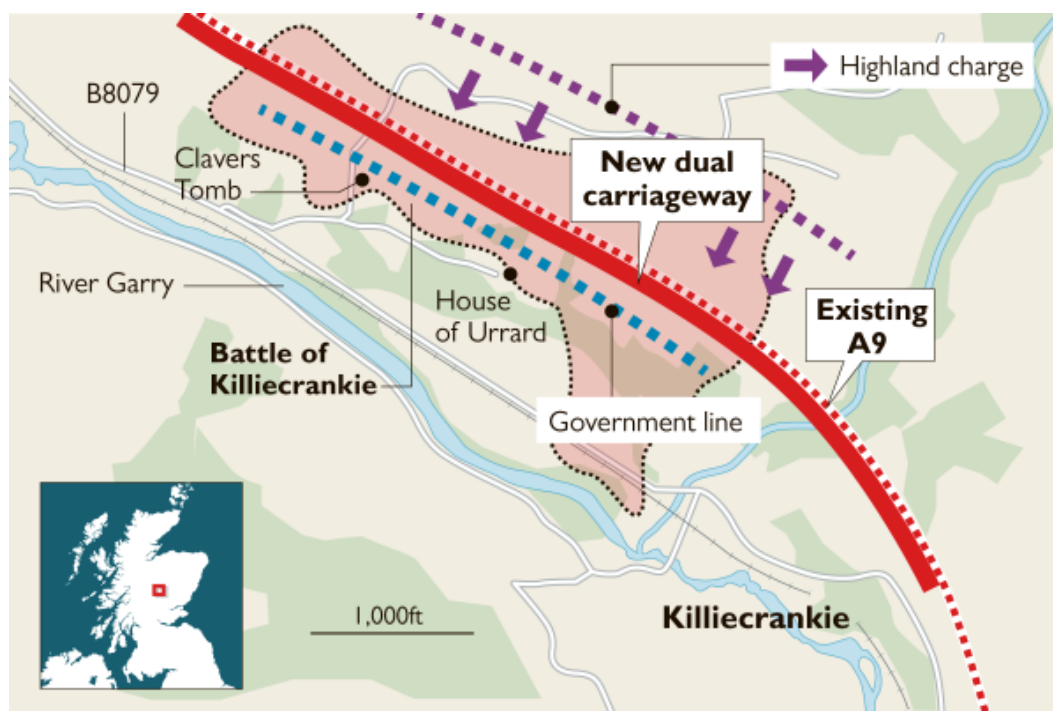
Rulzion Rattray, who has spent 20 years studying the battleground, says it would be hard to exaggerate its importance. “This development would completely obliterate the archaeological importance of the site,” he said.

“The lay-bys alone would remove critical features of the battleground, some of which have yet to be excavated. It is an irony that 2017 was designated as the year of history, heritage and archaeology, yet 2018 may go down as the year of its desecration.”

Henrietta Fergusson, who owns the Killiecrankie Hotel, was appalled at the decision to put the new route through wooded areas and close to houses, rather than open ground further up the hill. “This proposal will tarmac over precisely the area where the fighting took place,” she said. “It is the heart of the battleground and lots of the archaeology has not yet been looked at.”



doesn't make sense to use this route, which will mean cutting down hundreds of trees and burying a historic site. Once it's gone, it's gone. I've suggested an alternative route over open ground but they won't even look at it."



Yesterday a group of locals, who included guns and beaters from a neighbourhood shoot, gathered behind a banner to proclaim their defiance. They have until January 23 to lodge a formal objection and there will be at least three separate protests going in.

Transport Scotland accepts that the route will have some impact on the battlefield but argues that since the existing single-carriageway A9 already runs through the site, albeit clear of the main battlefield, it is its preferred route. It has carried out surveys, including metal detecting, and has consulted Historic Environment Scotland (HSE).



most important battles and it will be unforgivable if this site is lost without proper examination of the alternate route options,” he said.

“The Scottish government has a responsibility to protect our most culturally and historically important sites. They wouldn’t dream of building high rise flats on Edinburgh Castle so why is it OK to consider bulldozing this battlefield?”

HSE was not available for comment.

Armed Forces



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