

## The Battle of Culloden: 16<sup>th</sup> April 1746

The following notes are intended to assist interpretation of a site visit.

Location: Drumossie Moor near Inverness. The B9006 road, which passes this site, did not exist at date of the battle. John O'Sullivan, a key adviser to Bonnie Prince Charlie, chose this battle site. The site was not a wise choice.

Land Surface: Almost entirely covered with heather, which may have been shorter in those days due to grazing by animals. The terrain was boggy and flat-as it is today!

### The Jacobites:

- An army of about 5000 comprising mainly Highlanders with men from the Atholl Brigade, Clan Stuart (Stewart), Clan Donnachaidh, Clan Boyd, Clan MacDonald of Keppoch, Clan MacDonnell of Glengarry, Clan MacDonald of Clan Ranald, Clan MacKinnon, Clan Cameron, Clan Gordon, Clan Fraser, Clan MacGregor, Clan MacLean, Clan MacLeod, Clan MacIntyre, Clan Ogilvy, Clan Chisholm, Clan MacLaren, Clan MacLea, Clan MacBain, Clan MacLachlan, Clan MacNaghten and Clan Chattan (a federation) comprising members of Clan Davidson, Clan MacGillivray, Clan Macpherson, Clan MacKintosh, Clan MacDuff and Clan Farquharson.
- The term 'Jacobite' is Latin for James.
- These soldiers wore blue bonnets and a white cockade
- Weapons: Targ (shield), Brown Bess musket, just 10 three-pound cannon and broadswords. The Jacobites possessed no artillery or horses.
- Tactics: Lined up 6 deep. Key was the shock impact of the famous 'Highland Charge' which, unfortunately for the Jacobites, the Hanoverians had devised a defensive tactic.

### The Hanoverians:

- A highly disciplined and well resourced force of about 9000 under the command of the Duke of Cumberland, a relative of King George II. This army wore a black cockade. Contrary to common belief, this battle was not English verses Scots; in fact the Hanoverian force included about 2500 Scots including the ever loyal, Campbells. There was a determination to succeed in the Government side and to make amends for the defeats at Prestonpans and Falkirk.
- The infantry now used firelocks, which were faster to reload than the previous matchlock guns. These guns were also fitted with bayonets so that even if some of the enemy were able to reach the English front lines they were able to defend themselves against the broadswords of the Highlanders.
- The second line of Government troops were arrayed close to the existing Visitor Centre.

## Outcome

At outset the Highlanders stood for 40 minutes taking heavy punishment in the form of grapeshot and cannon.

When the order for the Highlanders to charge was finally given the British army stood firm. Faced with the well-organised infantry that fired their guns in stages, very few Highlanders managed to reach the English lines. Unable to get close enough to use their broadswords, some Highlanders even resorted to throwing stones at the British army.

The battle was over within one hour. Over 1200 clansmen died on the field against just 52 Redcoats (250 died later). This proved the Duke of Cumberland's only victory in an extensive military career.

No quarter was given by the Redcoats with all wounded executed. The dead were left to rot on the field for weeks. The slaughter and subsequent "ethnic cleansing" was such that no battle honours were awarded to the Government side.