

# KilliecrAnkie1689

9 February 2018

The course of the A9 widening project has taken a surprising – and possibly deadly - turn at Killiecrankie, the site of the bloodiest battle in Jacobite history.

Local residents who oppose the route that Transport Scotland plans through the Killiecrankie battlefield are horrified to learn that the location of possible graves was identified on the battlefield in November 2016. Transport Scotland and road designers, Jacobs, appear to have kept quiet about the discovery for as long as possible.

“We have just recently learned that some pits – which could be burial pits that were dug in the aftermath of the Battle of Killiecrankie - were identified during a geophysical survey, commissioned by Jacobs in November 2016,” says Henrietta Fergusson, a member of a campaigning group called Killiecrankie1689 that opposes the route that Transport Scotland wants.

“We are not against dualling the A9,” says Henrietta Fergusson. “But we object to this ill conceived plan.”

The possible burial pits have been discovered in a field adjacent to the existing A9 near the hamlet of Aldclune. It was where the fighting on 27 July 1689 between Jacobites, led by John Graham of Claverhouse (or Bonnie Dundee to his men), and Government troops, led by General Hugh Mackay, was at its most intense. “This is where men fought, died and as it turns out, may have been buried,” says Henrietta Fergusson.

Transport Scotland has issued draft Compulsory Purchase Orders to buy the field so they can build a slip road for a proposed new junction at Aldclune, create an enormous drainage basin and build a new access road to the basin.

However, this has met with an outcry from Historic Environment Scotland, Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust and Cairngorms National Park Authority. All of these organisations have lodged formal objections to Transport Scotland about the A9 plans at Killiecrankie.

Much more archaeological work has to be done on the battle site as Historic Environment Scotland says that the pits could be “highly significant features”. If they are verified as burial pits, they would have to be preserved *in situ*.

“This demonstrates how inadequate the planning is for the A9 here,” says Henrietta Fergusson. “They need to go back to the drawing board.”

## NOTES FOR EDITORS

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1. Information on the A9 project Killiecrankie to Glen Garry, including the Environmental Statement and draft Road Orders, is available on Transport Scotland’s website: <https://www.transport.gov.scot/projects/a9-dualling-perth-to-inverness/a9-killiecrankie-to-glen-garry/>

2. Jacobs, the design engineers for the A9 project from Killiecrankie to Glen Garry, commissioned AOC Archaeology Group of York to undertake an archaeological geophysical survey to investigate the potential for buried

archaeological remains on the proposed A9 at Killiecrankie in 2016. The gradiometer survey was done over 4 days from 14 to 18 November 2016. Seven parcels of land were studied, 5 of which were on the battle site area. On one of the parcels, something that archaeologists call “pit-like anomalies” were detected. According to AOC Archaeology, “these features could be related to the battle or its aftermath”.

3. Objections to Transport Scotland’s A9 plan at Killiecrankie have been submitted by Historic Environment Scotland, Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust, Cairngorms National Park Authority, Perth and Kinross Council, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Killiecrankie and Fincastle Community Council, heritage groups, historians and KilliecrAnkie1689.

4. The Battle of Killiecrankie was fought on 27 July, 1689. The Jacobites battle line was drawn on the hill that overlooks the A9 at Killiecrankie. They were led by John Graham of Claverhouse, Bonnie Dundee, who was killed in action. He was buried at St Brides Kirk near Blair Castle. The Government battle line was formed just south of the existing A9. The Government troops were led by General Hugh Mackay. The 2 sides clashed in the very area that is proposed for road-widening. It is estimated that fatalities were about 600 Jacobites and 1,500 Williamites. That is the highest toll of all Jacobite battles, including Culloden. At that time, senior figures may have been taken to be buried on consecrated ground. Otherwise the convention was to bury the fallen on or near the field of battle.

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