

Town in fight to commemorate 'forgotten' Battle of Littleferry

One hundred people died in Jacobean clash overshadowed by Culloden,

by Culloden, writes **Elle Duffy**



A HIGHLAND town is fighting to have a "forgotten" Jacobean battle memorialised after it became overshadowed by Culloden – which took place the very next day.

Community groups in the village of Golspie are hoping to erect a large memorial stone to commemorate the Battle of Littleferry ahead of its 276th anniversary next year.

As many as 100 people are said to have been killed in the clash on April 15, 1746, with twice that number injured.

But campaigners say the bloody battle has been "overshadowed" by the events of Culloden the following day.

And now, the "little-known" piece of Jacobite history has had an appropriate local stone identified for its memorial, and a spot has been earmarked for its standing.

"This is the first time ever that a full history of the battle has been written and is being captured by the erection of a memorial stone," said former commandant of Sandhurst and Littleferry resident, Major General Patrick Marriot.

"Very few have really been able to research the battle before and little interest has been shown in it.

"Increasing digitisation and access to hitherto largely unknown primary sources has made this much easier."

The battle came on the eve of Culloden, which was the final face-off of the Jacobite rising of 1745. It saw Bonnie Prince Charlie's army of Highlanders defeated by UK Government troops near Inverness.

It has been immortalised in songs, books, and on screen – most recently in the popular TV Series *Outlander*, starring Sam Heughan. Littleferry's clash was highlighted just days before the Battle of

Culloden after the Earl of Cromartie was ordered to rejoin Bonnie Prince Charlie at Inverness. He and his men were intercepted and attacked by Ensign John Mackay and others in the surrounding hills. Cromartie's troops were either



The Battle of Culloden, as painted by David Morier, above, saw Bonnie Prince Charlie's army of Highlanders defeated by British government troops

The Golspie Heritage Society has identified a stone to erect in the battle's memory, which is currently located on croft land just west of the town's famous Dunrobin Castle.

It holds particular significance as Dunrobin Castle is known as the place where the rebel forces eventually surrendered.

Campaigners say the stone is believed to date back more than 400 million years, and stands around 6ft high with a width of 5ft.

The next challenge facing the group is the stone's transportation. The commemorative stone, which will be displayed on the road from Golspie to Littleferry, weighs around ten tonnes and poses a significant logistical challenge to the team.

But the society has looked to local schools and community groups in the lead up to a potential commemorative ceremony next year, with the hope that the surrounding area will benefit



A local stone has been identified as a memorial to the Battle of Littleferry

killed or captured. Major General Marriot doesn't want Littleferry's efforts in 1745 to be forgotten, but he says that it has all but disappeared because of the following day's events. He said: "The battle was

overshadowed so much by Culloden that it disappeared, yet how many villages in the UK have a pristine battlefield around them?"

And plans to honour the memory of those who were lost to the fight have now taken a strong turn.

Golspie Community Council chairman Ian Sutherland says the project will bring yet another boost to the area's tourism industry.

"There's an excitement in the area," he explained.

"People tend to think of Culloden as a singular battle, but it was really the endgame of a civil war."

"It was almost brother fighting brother."

"Most recruits to the Jacobite cause, and to the locally recruited government companies in Scotland, were recruited out of feudal loyalty to their clan chiefs but there was considerable inter-clan rivalry too."

"This project helps bring forward another piece of the jigsaw."

"The community council are absolutely delighted to be involved with the unveiling of the stone."

"Not only will this important piece of history be a welcome tourist attraction, but it'll also make sure that this battle and those who were lost in it are not forgotten."