



BATTLE OF LANGSIDE

1568

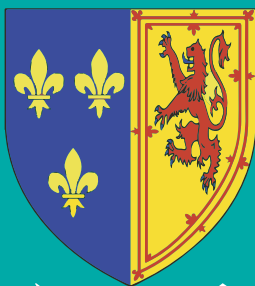


Fold out tour
INSIDE!

2nd Edition, 2023



BATTLE OF



1568

2018

LANGSIDE

Such wasted bravery
idle as a song,
Such hard-won ill
might prove Time's
verdict wrong,
And melt to pity
the annalist's iron
tongue.



The Battle of Langside

The **450th anniversary** of the Battle of Langside was commemorated on 13th May 2018. The battle was fought between the armies of Mary, Queen of Scots and her half-brother James Stewart, the Earl of Moray.

It was the culmination of a political and religious conflict which divided 16th century Scotland. Mary lost with consequences which **“settled the fate of Scotland, affected the future of England and had its influence over all Europe”** (J.H.Burton). Some of the issues are still with us today.

Fold out map
INCLUDED!

The choice of the small village of Langside as the battle site was, as we shall see, almost accidental. But the people of Langside and Scotland have long recognised its significance by erecting a monument in 1887, holding an exhibition at the 350th anniversary in 1918, the telling of the story in many books and creating myths around it.

For the 450th commemoration, the local community produced this guide as part of a series of events. It sets the context, describes some of the detail of the battle and suggests its consequences. The fold out map can be used as a walking guide to the site – and although the village and farms have been transformed into urban Glasgow, the geography, which played a key role in the outcome, remains distinct. Walk it and imagine both the excitement and the horror.



1568

A conflict which “settled the fate of Scotland, affected the future of England and had its influence over all Europe.”

(J.H.Burton)

My father was his, but not my mother,
We were, yet were not, sister, brother.
Over the wall I watched him move,
At ease through all the guarded grove.

MAY
1568



QUEEN MARY STUART
(AD 1542 – 1587)
Francois Clouet,
V&A Museum



**REGENT JAMES
STEWART, EARL OF
MORAY** (AD 1531- 1570)
Hugh Monro, Duff House

On the morning of 13th May 1568 the village of Langside woke in apprehension and growing panic as 8,000 - 10,000 armed men converged on their small community perched at the head of a deep lane above the White Cart Water.

With one force was Queen Mary of Scotland and her supporters and on the other, the army of her illegitimate half-brother, the Regent James Stewart 1st Earl of Moray, representing Mary's only son and crowned heir, the infant King James VI and future monarch of the United Kingdom.

Prominent in the two forces were the Hamilton family with the Queen and, with the Regent Moray, the Lennox family, parents of the murdered Lord Darnley, Mary's second husband.

The battle resulted in an unexpected and catastrophic defeat for the Queen's forces with about 150 men killed in the encounter and subsequent rout.

It took place within the area now occupied by Queen's Park, Langside College and the former Victoria Infirmary.

A NATION DIVIDED

THE PRISON

LOCHLEVEN CASTLE



As the only heir of her father, James V of Scotland, Mary had a glittering if brief early debut on the European stage as the wife of the King of France, Francois II, a union which offered the prospect of a joint Franco-Scottish entity, frustrated by his early death.

The seven years of her reign in Scotland opened in modest hope, a fledgling aspiration to compromise on the challenges of religious ruptures, a little court gaiety and the birth of a son and heir. All of this predated an inexorable spiral into rebellions, abductions, violations, murders, miscarriage and lethal divisions.

Mary had spent the year before the battle imprisoned in the island castle of Lochleven; isolated, physically forced to abdicate and apparently silenced. She was 25 years old.

On the evening of the 2nd May 1568, with the aid of two infatuated teenage sons of her gaolers, the Douglas family, she escaped and within two days was safely in the hands of her most powerful supporters, the house of Hamilton accompanied by 200 armed men from the East Lothian estates of the Seton family. The ten ensuing days were traumatic for both parties, as the Queen's supporters began to flood to her from West and South West Scotland and further assistance was guaranteed from the Earl of Huntly in the distant North East.

JUNE
1567



**SIR WILLIAM
KIRKCALDY OF GRANGE**
(AD 1520-1573)
Francois Clouet

The Regent's party rallied under his firm leadership as he reached out initially to immediate allies in the city of Glasgow, in Renfrewshire and the Lennox.

Here the Regent, with his custody of the infant king, had access to the small, but significant standing forces of the Scottish state which included the garrisons and artillery trains of the royal castles and professional mercenaries from France and Italy. They were equipped with both primitive hand guns and the more traditional archers of the Royal Bodyguard. With these he could match the advantage in numbers of the Queen's party.

By the evening before the battle, the Queen had assembled an army of 5,000 – 6,000 men. This was superior in strength to her opponent's 4,000 men but Moray had significant advantages both in his position in Glasgow and in possessing professional soldiers throughout his command structure. He was exceptionally astute in gaining the support of one of the most competent military officers in Scotland – Sir William Kirkcaldy of Grange, a man with European military experience and authority.

Queen Mary's forces were to be commanded by Archibald Campbell 5th Earl of Argyll, a powerful magnate who alone could put 5,000 soldiers in the field. It was, however, a command for which neither his military experience nor his mental state proved adequate.

During her week in Hamilton the Queen revoked her abdication and insisted to her Council that her intention was not to seek battle with her opponents, but to be taken to the stronghold of Dumbarton Castle.

REGENT'S PARTY

The route by which to convey the Queen to Dumbarton Castle from Hamilton was dictated by the limitations of only two bridges across the Clyde, at Bothwell Bridge and at Glasgow Bridge.

A crossing at Bothwell Bridge would be countered by Moray in Glasgow with the certainty of a battle somewhere on the outskirts of the town or in the town itself.

A rapid advance of the Queen's army down the south bank might avoid conflict if they managed either to seal off Glasgow Bridge or to pass it before Moray could find a stop line on the south side of the river. This was the decision made at her final Council meeting late in the evening of the 12th May.

This vital information was passed on to Moray within hours by an unknown spy within her Council and proved the key to his victory the next day.

This corridor of land between the Clyde and the Cart, barely two miles wide, would now be the scene of the Battle of Langside and the complexities of timings, elevations and the state of tracks and roads would be at the core of the participants' fates.

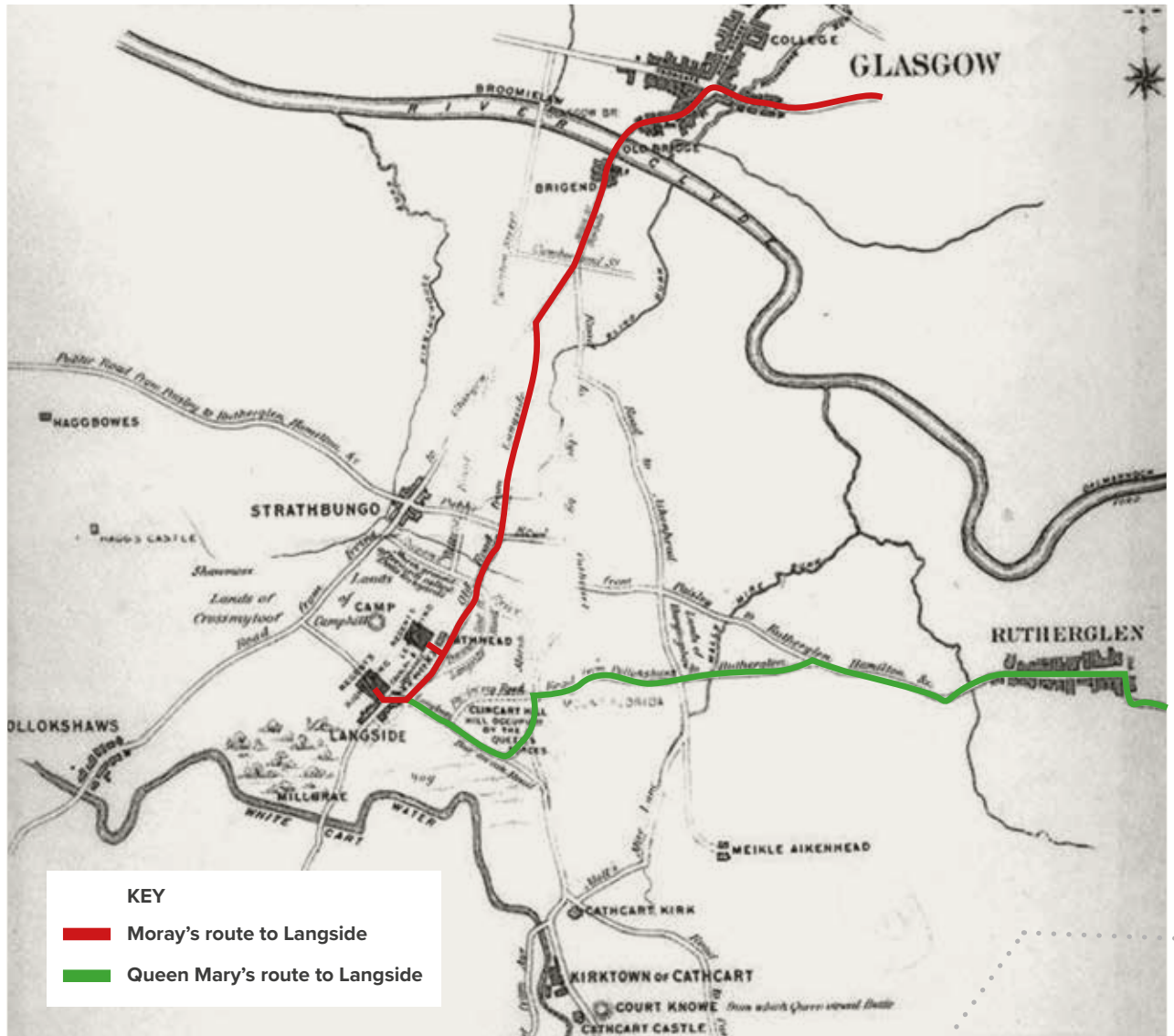
By about 5am, Mary's army was assembled and on the march for Rutherglen. The Regent's troops, camped outside the Gallowgate Port on the east side of Glasgow, would have already sent scouts out to Dalmarnock ford from where a view of Rutherglen would allow him to confirm his intelligence about her route.

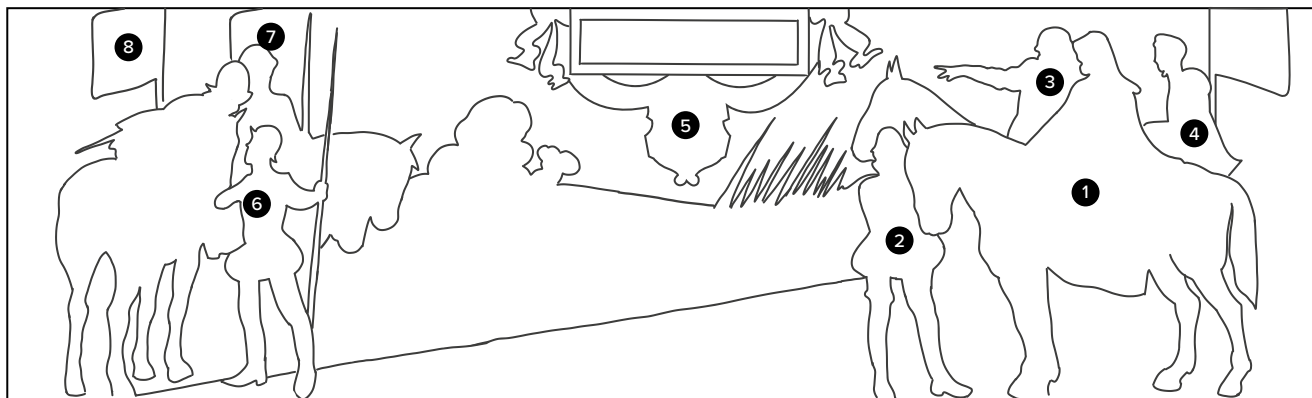
THE SUFFICIENT PLACE

MAY
12th 13th

LANGSIDE MAP

Sketch map relative to The Battle of
Langside by A.M. Scott FSAScot





PAINTING AND PEOPLE

Visit the large mural painting of the battle scene in Langside Library.

This was painted by Maurice Greiffenhagen (1862-1931) who was Professor of Life Classes at Glasgow School of Art. It was gifted to the people of Glasgow by the School Governors, and installed in 1920.

RIGHT HAND SIDE

1. **Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots** (1542 - 1587)
2. **Willie Douglas**, son of Sir William Douglas, who helped Mary escape from Lochleven
3. **Sir Archibald Campbell**, 5th earl of Argyll (1537 - 1573)
4. **Lady-in- Waiting** (one of the Queen's Four Marys)
5. **The Royal Banner**

LEFT HAND SIDE

6. **Sir Claud Hamilton**, 1st Lord Paisley (1546-1621)
7. **Arms of the Earls of Argyll**
8. **Arms of Claud Hamilton**

LANGSIDE RIDGE

Both sides must now have been acutely aware that the possession of the Langside ridge was essential to success in the battle.

It was a place which the military eye of Grange had already spotted and reconnoitred earlier in the week and in the morning, with the Regent's approval, he launched a daring plan to take a small force of about 400 over the Glasgow Bridge to seize Langside first. The Regent's forces were soon to follow him south and now the two columns would have seen each other coming into view on a collision course. A race for the high ground ensued.

With numerically superior forces, the Queen's army was confident. It would have come as an unwelcome blow when their scouts returned with news that activity was visible along the ridge which now rose before them and an agitated Argyll was faced by a further problem - his enemy was on the higher ground.

The Regent's forces were already lining up along the ridge - from the area now occupied by the Glasshouses to Pathhead Farm and down the slope to where the park meets with Queen's Drive – in two main divisions of about 2,000 men each.

The first, commanded by Lord Lindsay, was placed within and around the village of Langside where the Monument commemorates the battle. From here a deep and narrow causeway only 10 metres wide, hemmed in by high banks of earth and dykes, known as 'The Lang Loan' (now Battlefield Road), ran down through open fields to where Langside Library and its commemorative mural now stands. It was to this force that Moray sent Grange to assess and inform him of events which were not visible from his own position at Pathhead Farm.



THE RIDGE AT
LANGSIDE (AD 1780)

Mary's forces were now attempting to deploy on Clincart Hill, a site now occupied by Glasgow Clyde College Langside Campus, with a superior cavalry force led by Lord Herries and her main body of infantry commanded by Argyll.

It was at this point that a central and mysterious misfortune occurred when the Earl of Argyll, the commander of the Queen's forces, fell from his horse in either a physical fit or a mental collapse, thus removing any central command from subsequent events.

The battle opened with an indecisive artillery duel between the cannon on either side. This ceased as Mary's cavalry launched an attack across the area now occupied by the hospital. This was met by Moray's smaller force, which included archers and hagbutters (musket-men). A bitter, sporadic encounter subsided into a sullen standoff.

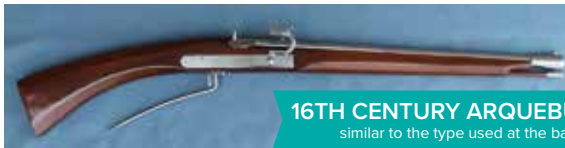
A grimmer scenario was opening around the Lang Loan and the little village of Langsyd at the top of the hill.

LANG LOAN BATTLE

THE CAULDRON

LANGSYD VILLAGE

This was a desperate assault by the Queen's forces to seize the village, now firmly held by the Regent's forces, with his hagbutters already filtering down through the fields on each side of the Lang Loan.



16TH CENTURY ARQUEBUS
similar to the type used at the battle.

The Queen's vanguard of c2,000 soldiers, with Hamilton's men in front, now moved down to the lower ground between Clincart Hill and the track leading to the foot of the Lang Loan. This track would have allowed them to arrange the column and pick up a faster pace for the ascent ahead.

Led by Sir Claud Hamilton, the vanguard column of 800 men, 8 wide and 100 long, funnelled into the confines of the Lang Loan, armed with steel tipped pikes, known as halberds. As they struggled up the Loan, Moray's hagbutters began to mount the banks and gardens to fire into the dense mass of men surging up the hill.



PUSH OF PIKE
Battle reenactment,
The Sealed Knot.

Was none who would be foremost
To lead such dire attack
But those behind cried "Forward!"
And those before cried "Back!"

However, they were unable to stop the impetus of the vanguard, which arrived at the summit 'out of breath' as described by Melville. Waiting there to receive them were the lines of Lindsay's men

The ear-splitting impact of these two formations of pike was both terrifying and chaotic as they locked together and each tried to force the other back.

It was at this point that Kirkcaldy of Grange launched his second intervention which decided the issue. Recognising that the line on the right was giving ground under the initial shock, he sped to Moray and urged him to commit fresh troops to the struggle at the top of the Lang Loan.

Kirkcaldy led the reinforcements across the face of the hill and appeared on the other side of the Hamilton column jammed into the Lang Loan. A surge of panic ensued in the engaged mass at the head of the Loan as some urged a stand and others attempted to retreat and then rippled back to the leaderless centre on Clincart Hill. Within moments the Queen's army began to dissolve.

The Lang Loan
(Bartlefield Road)



AFTERMATH AND CONSEQUENCES

The **confusion and chaos** must soon have been detected by the Queen and her companions, resulting in a memorable phrase from Melville's account

“...her Majesty lost all courage which she had never done before, and took so great a fear...”

She seems to have abandoned her escorts and had to be recovered in flight by the remnants of her cavalry force.

Mary disappears for the next two days, before surfacing at the house of Terregles, near to Dumfries, the home of the Lord Herries. A rest of a further two days was followed by her decision to seek help from her cousin and sister monarch in England, to the anguish and despair of her remaining supporters. A boat was obtained and a day later she appeared with a small retinue at the gates of Carlisle Castle.

If her courage had briefly wavered, her stamina had not.

Langside has been described as more a sharp skirmish than a battle, lasting around 45 minutes. Contemporary accounts describe anywhere



QUEEN MARY AND HER ESCORT
FLEE FROM THE BATTLE
SIR JOHN LAVERY, 1886 (BRUSSELS)

Such wasted bravery idle as a song,
Such hard-won ill might prove
Time's verdict wrong,
And melt to pity the
annalist's iron tongue.



FOTHERINGHAY CASTLE
8TH FEBRUARY (AD 1587)

between “scarcely any” and 300 casualties. The most reliable is in an account held in the State Papers, dated the 16th May 1568. Based on an estimate made on the field of battle, this claims: “...between six or seven score, besides those that have died since...”. About 150 seems the best estimate, with perhaps 100 or so more surviving with wounds both physical and mental.

State trials, forfeiture and decades of financial ruin ensued for many but for Mary, after nineteen years of plotting and imprisonment, the end came on the execution block at Fotheringhay Castle in February 1587. It would be sixteen years before her son would be guardedly welcomed to the throne of England as the uncontested heir of a United Kingdom of both monarchies.



MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS
AFTER THE BATTLE OF
LANGSIDE
(STAINED GLASS BY
W&J KIER, GLASGOW 1874)

LANGSIDE MYTHS

There are many stories surrounding Mary and the Battle, embellished over the years by local people and, sadly, by some historians.

CROSSMYLOOF

If you walk along Langside Avenue to the junction with Pollokshaws Road, you are at the centre of the old village of Crossmyloof. Across from Langside Halls is an old pub called the Corona. Above the door is a plaster mould of a hand with a cross. The story goes that, after the battle, Mary tried to get to Dumbarton by this route but was blocked. She placed her cross in her hand ("loof" in Old Scots) and said, "by the cross in my loof I will be there tonight, in spite of yon traitors". However, the name pre-dates the battle and it is more likely that Mary rode south to avoid capture.

DEIL'S KIRKYARD

On a moonlit night in 1831, the wife of the keeper of Camphill Lodge looked out to see "with horror the interred of Langside leave their silent abode in the old marsh ground.... in the garb of the battle and headed by the Deil himself they marched down the avenue" (Alexander Scott). The old marsh ground was said to be where the dead of the battle were buried and was known locally as the Deil's Kirkyard. It is roughly where the pond is now in Queen's Park. There is in fact no record of where the dead of the Battle of Langside were buried. Most were Hamiltons and their bodies may well have been taken home according to custom.

COURT KNOWE

We know that Mary and her retinue were detached from the main column and sent to a place of safety from which she could view the battle and rapidly re-join her army. As no contemporary account indicates where, several viewpoints have been suggested over the years.

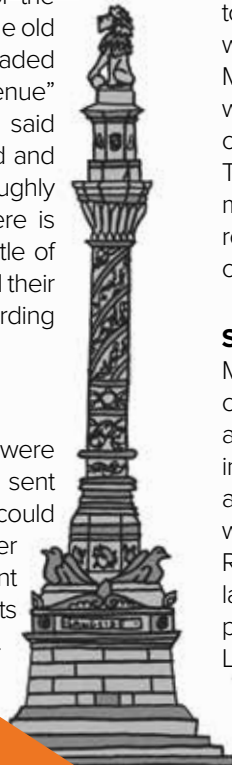


The most prominent location is on a small knoll, immediately adjacent to the site of Old Cathcart Castle on Old Castle Road, Cathcart. On the east side of the road there is, on the summit of the knoll, a memorial granite slab inscribed "M.R. 1568" and erected by General Sir George Cathcart in 1799, to replace an ancient thorn tree on the same site known as "Queen Mary's Thorn." Objections to this location are its proximity to Cathcart Castle, which was owned by Lord Semple, who was with Moray's forces at the battle. This would place Mary within reach of her enemy, with only a small escort to protect her. Suggestions that the castle would have been left unattended on the day stretch credulity. In any case, the view from Court Knowe, across a heavily wooded landscape, would have been severely limited.

Other sites that suggest themselves as vantage points include the tower of the Stewarts of Castlemilk, who were amongst Mary's supporters. This is physically too far to offer a view of the battle. Another suggestion was Crookston Castle, however this would suggest Mary had gone past Langside, in which case she would have kept going. More likely is the low ridge of Aikenhead, across which runs Prospecthill Road. This is on the line of advance of Mary's army on the morning of the battle and would have left a clear route along which to withdraw. Wherever it was she observed the battle, it was from there she fled south.

STREET NAMES

More real are the numerous street names you will come across all around Langside, Queens Park and Battlefield. Many refer to people who took part, including Moray, Eglinton, Herries, Grange, Terregles and Lethington. Other names offer links to places with which Mary was associated, including Dundrennan Road (abbey) and Lochleven Road (castle), this latter originally Katrine Road, renamed c1890. Most prominent is Battlefield Rd, originally Bus' an' Aike Lane; aike being the old Scots word for oak.



THE LANGSIDE MONUMENT

The Monument at Langside was erected in 1887, 300 years after Mary's death, and was designed by Alexander Skirving.

In addition to the lion with a cannonball under its paw, the column is decorated with thistles, roses and fleur-de-lys, reflecting Mary's coat-of-arms. It marks the site of the most ferocious hand-to-hand part of the battle and its decisive turning point.



FURTHER READING

The Battle of Langside MDLXVIII, Alexander Malcolm Scott (Kissinger Legacy Reprints, 2010).

Mary Queen of Scots at Langside, Ludovic McLellan Mann (1918) - published specifically for the 350th anniversary of the battle.

Mary Queen of Scots: a Study in Failure, Jenny Wormald (John Donald, Edinburgh 2017).

The Memoirs of Sir James Melville of Halhill, (The Folio Society, London 1969).

A History of Scotland John Hill Burton (7 vols. 1853-1870 Edinburgh).

Mary Queen of Scots, Antonia Fraser (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London 1969)

Collected Poems: Edwin Muir (Faber and Faber, London, 2003).

WEB SOURCES:

Historic Environment Scotland; Battle of Langside:

<https://portal.historicenvironment.scot/downloads/battlefields>

There is also an interesting interactive webpage showing the progress of the battle with maps on the Urban Glasgow website: <https://urbanglasgow.co.uk/the-battle-of-langside-t1118.html>

Langside Community Heritage

www.langsidecommunityheritage.org

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Langside 450

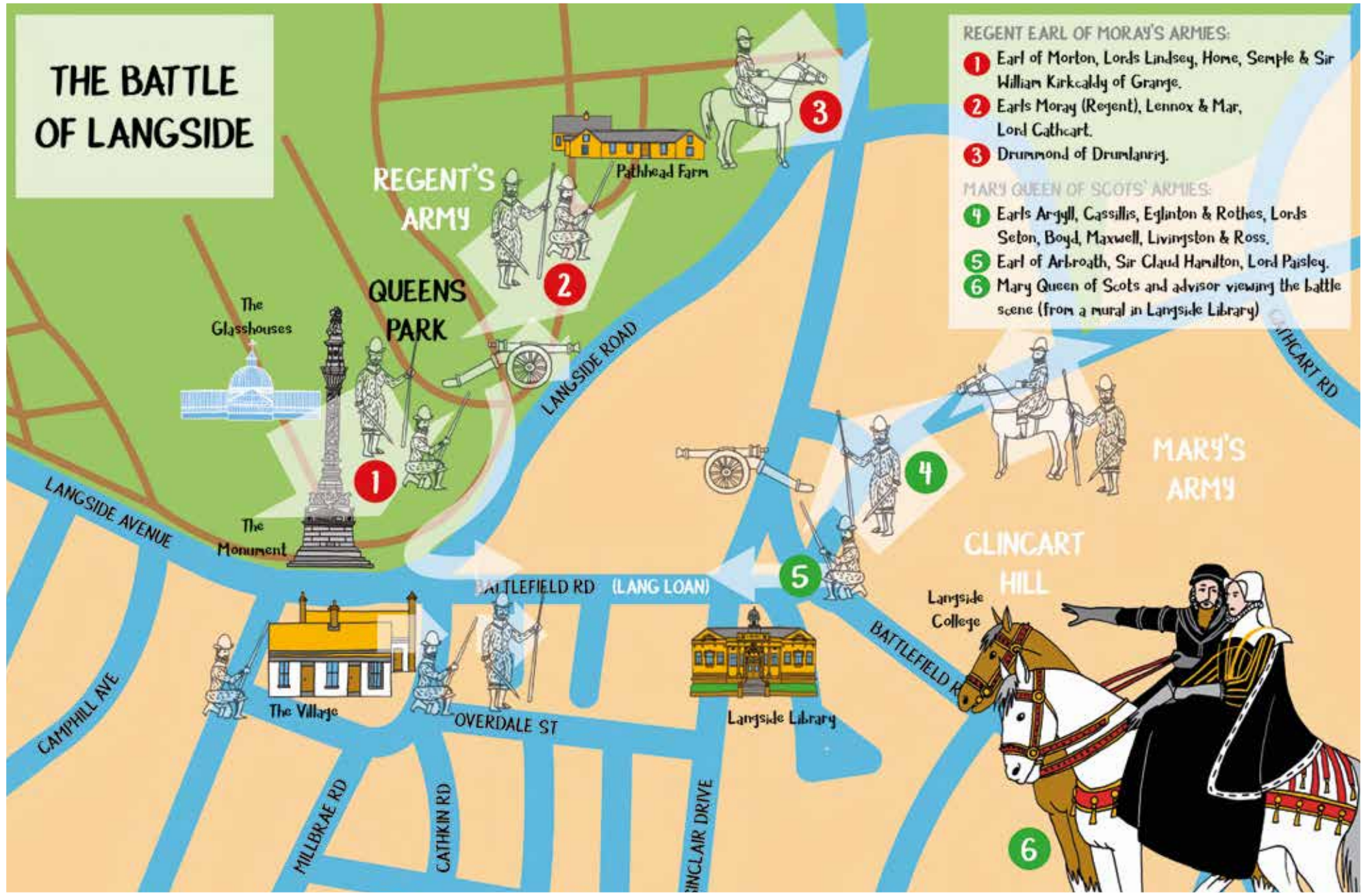
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THE BATTLE OF LANGSIDE



REGENT'S
ARMY

QUEENS
PARK

REGENT EARL OF MORAY'S ARMIES:

- 1 Earl of Morton, Lords Lindsey, Home, Semple & Sir William Kirkcaldy of Grange.
- 2 Earls Moray (Regent), Lennox & Mar, Lord Cathcart.
- 3 Drummond of Drumlanrig.

MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS' ARMIES:

- 4 Earls Argyll, Cassillis, Eglinton & Rothes, Lords Seton, Boyd, Maxwell, Livingston & Ross.
- 5 Earl of Arbroath, Sir Claud Hamilton, Lord Paisley.
- 6 Mary Queen of Scots and advisor viewing the battle scene (from a mural in Langside Library)

MARY'S
ARMY

CLINCART
HILL

Langside
College

The Village

Langside Library

Pathhead Farm

The
Glasshouses

The
Monument

BATTLEFIELD RD (LANG LOAN)

OVERDALE ST

LANGSIDE AVENUE

CAMPBILL AVE

MILLBRAE RD

CATHKIN RD

FINCLAIR DRIVE

LANGSIDE ROAD

BATTLEFIELD RD

CATHCART RD