



The Ayton Family Society

President – Pieter Cor Aitton



Ayton Family Gathering 2010 - Ayton Castle

Convener's Letter

Winter has arrived again with its shorter days and longer nights so I hope you are all cosy by your firesides while reading this latest edition of our *Newsletter*.

The end of any year is a time for reflection and 2010 has seen changes within our society. Our society sadly lost its founder and first convener with the passing of Jim Eaton in May, while Malcolm Ayton stood down as treasurer at the AGM, held at Ayton Castle, in August. I was voted in as convener and I thank the members present at the AGM for this honour. Hamish Neilson has taken on the dual role of secretary and treasurer which we hope will make the administration a bit simpler. Malcolm remains a committee member. We have a vacancy for at least one more committee member and would love to co-opt any volunteer who feels that they could contribute to the society.

Looking forward to 2011, we hope to make progress with getting the society on line. It seems easy enough for someone with a little PC knowledge to set up a website, but a lot more complicated to set one up to the standard we are aiming for. As the new site will hopefully get the attention of Ayton's/Eaton's from all corners of the globe we feel that we must do it right. Your committee is also looking for a suitable venue for our 2011 AGM. This task gets harder every year, trying to find a new venue which has family connections for such a small clan as ours is not easy. Anyone who has any ideas please forward your suggestions to Hamish for consideration.

One person who sadly has not managed to our last two AGM's is our Genealogist, Alison Sones. I hope that you and John are both well. If you have any information on your family please pass it on to Alison. We would like to include family trees on our website; these will only be available to paid up members. However if you have a family tree and don't want it to be put on the website please still send it to Alison with a note saying that we do not have permission to publish it.

Now I did warn you at the AGM that my skills at writing a long chatty Convener's Letter would not match those you have been used to from Jim, I am therefore not going to apologise that this one is maybe a bit on the short side. What I will say is that looking through some early editions of the *Newsletter* I see that members sent in letters giving, or requesting, family information. I am sure that the editor would be pleased if this habit was resumed. I will just finish by saying a Happy Christmas and a good healthy and prosperous New Year to you all.

Yours, David Eaton
Convener

Ramsay Aytoun

28th June 1923 - 10th January 2011

It is with great sadness that I have to inform the membership of the passing of one of our founder members, Ramsay Aytoun.

Ramsay and his wife Mary attended the small gathering of Aytons/Eatons, held at the home of Jim and Alison Eaton, in Cranshaws, Berwickshire, where it was decided to form a family society of people interested in these names. The following year the inaugural meeting of the society was held at Ayton Castle and Ramsay was elected treasurer, a duty he carried out impeccably until he was forced to resign due to ill health. Ramsay and Mary remained staunch members of the society and I think that I am correct in saying that they attended all our annual gatherings except the last one, Ramsay's health not allowing them to travel.

Ramsay was a quiet dignified man whose personality shone through without him saying many words. On the outside of the parliament building in Edinburgh there are a few sayings carved on the Canongate wall, one is an old Gaelic proverb "Abair ach beagan is abair gu math e" - "Say but little but say it well." This describes Ramsay perfectly.

Ramsay spent most of his life working for British Gas and by his retirement held the responsible job as House Service Manager. However he also worked for some time as a mechanic and never lost his passion for the motor car. He also served during WWII, having enlisted on his 18th birthday. He saw service in the India Ocean and was aboard the first ship to sail through the Suez Canal.

Although Ramsay was interested in football he did not like the football crowds so very rarely attended any matches. His early sport was badminton, I don't know how well he played but he played well enough to turn the head of one of the young lady players, this resulting in a marriage which lasted for 53 years. Or maybe it was Mary who was the good player who turned Ramsay's head! In later life Ramsay took up golf, a pastime he enjoyed until his heart condition stopped him playing.

After retiring Mary persuaded Ramsay to buy a caravan and with Ramsay's passion for motoring they both enjoyed many happy hours gallivanting round the country. Alison Eaton, Malcolm Ayton, Hamish Neilson and David Eaton represented the Ayton Family Society at Ramsay's funeral on Thursday 20th January in Edinburgh. The respect his friends showed for him meant that there were more people than seats, a true tribute to a perfect gentleman. I am sure that we all pass on our condolences and best wishes to Ramsay's best friend, Mary, his wife.

David Eaton

AGM and Family Gathering at Ayton Castle

Hamish Neilson

This year 15 members and spouses met at Ayton Castle, where facilities for the Annual General Meeting were kindly made available by Lady Christine de la Rue.

The Secretary, Hamish Neilson, summarised a letter from the President, Pieter Cor Aitton, noting his regrets at not being able to be present, and passing on his good wishes. Cor wrote that he and Fok, his wife were 87 and almost 92 years old, and travelling long distances was a problem. Cor then thanked everyone for coming to the meeting, which he highly appreciated.

Cor particularly wished to write "a few words on Jim Eaton, who passed away in May 2010. The Ayton Family Society lost a great man, a great Chairman. Jim was a driving force behind the Society. He knew a lot on the Aytons and was very much willing to share his knowledge with us. The Society will miss him, but also I will miss him very much."



"Although we knew that Jim was ill for some time, my wife and I were very sad when we received the news that Jim passed away. In the past we have spent wonderful days with Jim and Alison at their house in Scotland. Days on which we still think back with much pleasure. We wish Alison strength in this difficult time." Cor thanked the organisers of the annual gathering, and wished everyone a wonderful day.

David Eaton spoke as Acting-Convenor for the last year. David paid tribute to his brother Jim's role in establishing the Society, including setting up the meetings even before 1995. David called for articles for the Newsletter from members of the Society, and also for more members to join the Committee. He had been working on the Ayton and Eaton heraldry pages for the website.

HN reported the death of Mrs Dorothy Sayer of north London. He was glad to note that Dorothy's daughter Rowena continues the family membership.

Treasurer Malcolm Ayton noted with concern that a number of members had so far failed to renew their memberships this year. The Accounts prepared by him were considered and approved; they showed a balance of £3,053.31.

However, Malcolm regretted that his wife, Jean's illness, and work commitments had lead to a failure to carry out all of the Treasurer's duties. Some cheques from members had not been paid into the bank in time; Malcolm would pay these from his own pocket. He did not propose to stay on as Treasurer. To take the load from him, Hamish offered to take on the Treasurer role as well as Secretary.

During the Election of Office Bearers David Eaton was elected Convenor, and Hamish Neilson was elected Secretary/Treasurer.

David Scott Aiton was elected Newsletter Editor/IT Officer. Malcolm Ayton was elected to the Committee. Lady Christine suggested that David Henry Liddell-Grainger, who is a helicopter airline pilot, might be interested in becoming a Committee member. Hamish agreed to send information to her, to be passed on.

There were calls for the AGM & Gathering event 2011 to be held on a Sunday, rather than a Saturday. It was suggested that the event might be held at Aytoun Hall in Auchterarder, to see the renovation works, if completed.



Under Any Other Competent Business, Stephanie Robertson spoke about her paper on the possibility of a trip outside the UK to the WWI battlefield memorials. She felt that a focused short trip (possibly over a weekend?) to the Somme or Ypres, at which she could act as guide, would be best, preferably not including the Saarland as well. She could work up the details for the next Newsletter, but she

would prefer not to arrange transport, because members would probably be coming from various places in the UK.

Stephanie also reported that Clan Donnachaid (with which she is associated) has obtained its tartan in a polycotton fabric, which Janet Washington's dress shop in Pitlochry makes up. The shop may make waistcoats, and similar garments at a cost as low as £5/metre. It was agreed to investigate and, if suitable, to advertise for orders in a forthcoming Newsletter.

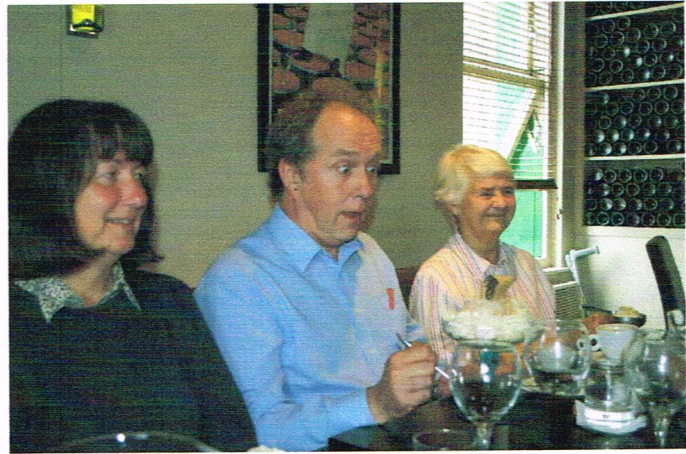


Bill Eaton asked why the subscription had been raised to £10, when there is a large balance and expenditure had only been £224 in the past year. The reply was that the website was likely to cost a significant amount, and the fee had remained at the 1995 level for 14 years. Furthermore, Newsletter costs had risen steadily, together with postage costs. In general the Society was much cheaper than many others.



Bill Eaton also asked why the website was taking so long to prepare, when he had provided the former one through his own ISP at no cost. David Scott Aiton replied that the proposed site needed higher levels of security than had been possible through Bill's private site. A local firm had been commissioned, but had effectively wasted 11 months. It had then been hoped to place the work with David's wife,

but a recent increase in workload had prevented her involvement. The cost was likely to be £1,500.



Stephanie Robertson asked whether the Newsletter could be sent by email. David replied that it could, but only half the members have email. Additional expenditure would be needed to obtain software to convert the Newsletter to a form that could be easily sent, but which could not be altered,



A vote of thanks to the Chair was proposed and seconded. After lunch in the nearby village of Eyemouth, members explored the Maritime Museum on the quayside, and were inspected in turn by three large seals, which were cruising around the harbour in the afternoon sunshine.

Four memorials to Lieutenant John Marriott Aytoun Stephanie Robertson

While browsing on the Internet, I came across information about an Aytoun memorial that had been lost from sight for over 100 years.

The memorial appeared in the Scottish War Memorials project, which began in December 2006 as an internet discussion forum for anyone interested in Scottish war memorials. Members began posting images and transcriptions and within the first year over 80% of all of Scotland's civic war memorials had been photographed and recorded on the forum.

In late 2007 it was renamed the Scottish War Memorial Project, since it had evolved into something much more than a forum and it is now being run as a project under the auspices of the Scottish Military Research Group. See <http://www.spanglefish.com/scottishmilitaryresearchgroup/>

One of the project members gained exceptional access to the old organ loft in St Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh, which is not normally accessible to the public. He was able to photograph five memorials which are not listed on the United Kingdom National Inventory of War Memorials.

One of the memorials, which may have been hidden from view for over 100 years, reads:

Sacred to the memory of John Marriott Aytoun
Lieutenant 94 Regiment
5th son of the late Capt M. C. W. Aytoun R.A.
Killed in action whilst in advance 4th May 1860
At Barra Pass Punjab East Indies
This table in token of respect and esteem
is erected by his brother officers

A photograph of the memorial, which is a handsome tribute from his fellow officers, can be seen on the website.

John Marriott Aytoun was the son of Marriott Chadwick Walker Aytoun of Purin, Fife, and grandson of Roger Aytoun, 9th Laird of Inchdairnie. He was born on 19 November 1832, so he was 27 at the time of his death. He was buried at Bangiwala Kach, Waziristan (now in Pakistan). A website on the Indian expeditions records that there is also a memorial to him in St. Augustine's Church, Kohat, also now in Pakistan: 'Mashood Wuzerees 1860. Lieut J.M. Aytoun. 2nd Punjab Infantry.' The boundary wall of the church was hit by a Taliban rocket in February 2010.

John Marriott Aytoun has a fourth memorial, as he is commemorated on the grave of his brother Howard Douglas Aytoun in Dean Cemetery, Edinburgh. Howard had also pursued a military career and had died young. A third brother who followed a military career, Eustace De Vescie Aytoun (who died in 1869 aged 29) was also commemorated on the same monument, a sad record of the loss of young men in their twenties.

Tartan polycotton Stephanie Robertson

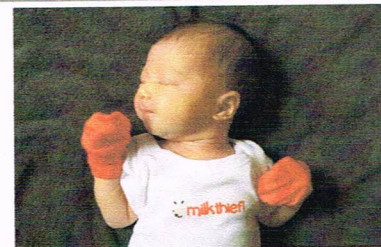
Now the Ayton tartan exists, Society members might like to consider a possibility that has been taken up very successfully by the Clan Donnachaidh Society. Janet Washington at Claire Charles Designs in Pitlochry has polycottons made up in various tartans and will commission a new polycotton tartan, provided at least 10 people express an interest in buying it. See www.clairecharlesdesigns.co.uk for illustrations of some of the other tartans.

The polycottons are 60 inches wide and cost £15.00 a metre. It is good quality material that does not pill and is very crease resistant. Either the cotton could be made into a skirt in one of the shop's designs or lengths could be purchased for personal use. In addition to skirts, the material could be used for other items such as tablecloths, waistcoats, cushions - and even, gentlemen, some rather dashing pyjamas.

If there were enough people willing to buy, the Ayton Society would have to provide a sample of the tartan, which would be copied, and then someone from the Society would receive a copy of the sett and approve the size and colours.

For expressions of interest, please contact: stephr@pt.lu.

Isla Cheuk Yin Ho Eaton



It is with great pleasure that I announce the birth of my third grandchild. Isla Cheuk Yin Ho Eaton was born in Dundee on the 5th September 2010 and is the first child of my younger son Ronald and his wife Iris. As can be seen by the picture she is fighting fit.
David Eaton

Possibility of an Ayton First World War Trip

Stephanie Robertson

In September 2008 I accompanied Jim, Alison and David Eaton on a visit to the grave of their uncle who was killed near Loos in 1918. The visit coincided with the fire in the Channel Tunnel so we started out with no certainty of being able to get on a Eurostar train. On arrival in London, we discovered that one train was going, but not to Calais where I had left my car. We headed off into the unknown but fortunately everything worked out. About three hours later we were dining in a restaurant in Lille, having managed to get the last rooms in a nearby hotel. We eventually made it to our booked accommodation and the visit concluded successfully.

After contending with travel and hotel emergencies, it might be safer to keep a low profile but, as I live on the continental side of the Channel, it occurs to me that it might be possible to make a contribution to the Society by assisting with a more general First World War trip for members. I cannot undertake to organize the travel arrangements for such a trip but if there are people interested from the same area, it should be possible to arrange to travel together. Depending on numbers, transport would probably have to involve cars brought by participants, in addition to my own car unless someone wanted to organize a minibus. At the very least, I should be able to help with showing people round.

The best format would probably be a weekend in a sector where several members share an interest (for example near Ypres or on the Somme).

There are Aytons commemorated in several sectors, as shown on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission website. If we only consider the name Ayton on memorials to the missing, we find the names of 13 men who were lost in battle (see below - the dates reveal that many of these men fell within a few days of others on the memorial). There are of course also a number of Aytons, Aitons, Aytouns and Eatons commemorated in the war cemeteries. Many people will have records and stories concerning relatives who were killed and relatives who fortunately returned home. Others might be interested in just visiting the sites.

The first thing would be to find out whether there is any interest in such a trip, where it might be, a good time of year and possible arrangements. If you have any thoughts on the subject, would you contact me on stephr@pt.lu.

AYTONS COMMEMORATED ON MONUMENTS TO THE MISSING

Arras Memorial

Andrew George Ayton, Private, 25 April 1917, Suffolk Regiment
William Ayton, Private, 12 April 1917, Royal Scots

Loos Memorial

George Ayton, Private, 12 October 1915, Northamptonshire Regiment
Matthew Ayton, Private, 25 September 1915, Seaforth Highlanders

Thiepval Memorial

Fred Ayton, Private 19 August 1916, Middlesex Regiment
James Ayton, Private, 2 August 1916, Royal Scots Fusiliers
Robert Ayton, Company Sergeant Major, 8 July 1916, Yorkshire Regiment

Menin Gate, Ypres

Christopher Ayton, Private, 15 February 1915, Middlesex Regiment
George William Ayton, Rifleman, 30 July 1915, King's Royal Rifle Corps
Sidney Wilfred Ayton, Rifleman, 14 April 1916, Rifle Brigade
William Henry Ayton, Private, 17 December 1914, The Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment)
William John Ayton, Serjeant, 31 October 1914, The Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment)

Tyne Cot Memorial

Joseph Ayton, Private, 16 April 1918, Seaforth Highlanders

What's in a name?

David Eaton

Being a member of a family history society I think is proof that we are all proud of our surnames, no matter how they are spelt. However sometimes they prove to be not what we expect, and I give an example here.

As you will see elsewhere in this *Newsletter* I have become a grandfather again, this time thanks to my younger son Ronald and his wife Iris. Iris was born and brought up in Hong Kong and so in November 2008 the family set off for an Oriental wedding in this interesting part of the world. My wife Eileen and I had by then got to know Iris quite well but had never met her parents. We decided that as we had never travelled this far before we would leave early, meet Iris's parents and see a bit of Hong Kong. The wedding was in the Shatin area of Hong Kong and the majority of us "Westerners" were booked into the splendid Royal Park

Hotel, which had just been vacated by the equestrian teams taking part in the Olympics. However arriving early, Eileen and I had booked to stay for a couple of nights in The Eaton Hotel in the centre of the bustling market/tourist area of Hong Kong.

I first saw that there was an Eaton Hotel in Hong Kong when a stay there was advertised as first prize in a competition run by the Post Office. So when we were planning our trip I looked the hotel up on the internet and thought we must stay there.



So now to the name. Why should a large hotel in bustling Hong Kong be called The Eaton Hotel? I made an enquiry at the reception desk and was introduced to the duty manager. He told me that the hotel was owned by a Chinese businessman who had made the name up from the following elements. Ton (or Tong) is a word meaning "Welcome to the East" and as a Chinaman the owner is very keen on dragons and seemingly E is the best letter in China for dragons. The "a" I presume was just added to make the name easier.

So all you members whose initial is A you will be glad to know that the dragons are on the E side. Thank goodness they are all in the Middle-East!

The Spanking Roger

Hamish Neilson



I took this picture of the Spanking Roger pub on a recent trip to Manchester. Some of you may remember my article in Newsletter 27 about Roger Aytoun, 9th Laird of Inchdairnie in Fife. The pub, at 40 Sawley Road, Miles Platting is now owned by a retired boxer, who goes by the name of Emmanuel Gabriel, and he told me that the pub is soon going to be renovated

Editorial

Sadly I have to inform you that this will be my last newsletter as editor as I am standing down from the committee. I have greatly enjoyed the role over the past five years and must thank all the contributors who have kindly sent in articles however pressure of other commitments sadly means that something has to give.

I wish whoever takes over the role every success in the future and I am sure that all members will do their best to support them.

Your aye,

David Scott Aiton

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