

# The Ayton Family Society

**President – Pieter Cor Aitton**

## Convener's Letter

I was taught that when writing or giving staff reports, or indeed any kind of report, I should always start with something good, put any bad bits in the middle and finish with something positive, so this is how I am going to deal with this Convener's letter.

As you know David Scott-Aiton, due to new work commitments, resigned from the committee and gave up the editorship of our newsletter after Newsletter No 30. I would just like to say on behalf of the society 'Thank you David for your contribution and good luck with your new contract, we hope that you will continue to participate in the activities of the society.'

However due to the lack of an editor I am sure you will have noticed the lack of newsletters this year. Happily I can now report that we have a new editor and a volunteer at that. Our new editor is our historian and honorary member Stephanie Robertson, I quote from the email I received from her. 'I see from the latest newsletter that David Scott-Aiton is no longer able to produce it. Very unwisely, from my point of view, I will say that I could put it together. I would be willing to do this in memory of Jim.' This does not only solve our lack of editorship but it is such a splendid gesture that I am sure you will all applaud Stephanie's offer.

As you may know Stephanie lives and works in Luxemburg so she will put the Newsletter into pdf format and forward it to our secretary who will

produce it in hard copy and send it out to our members. But now for the bad bit, if you, the membership, don't contribute to the Newsletter then don't expect it to be very full. Please, please send something, articles, photographs, drawings, etc., large or small, to Stephanie, or send them to Hamish or myself and we will forward them on to Stephanie - it's up to you.

Well now back to the good news. We have arranged to hold our AGM on our traditional weekend in August, so put Sunday 14th August in your diaries now. We are going to return to Auchterarder to view the restored Aytoun Hall. We were very well received by the local restoration group on our last visit and they are looking forward to having us back and showing us the improvements that have been made. For more details see the secretary's announcement.

As you read above, I intended to finish on a positive note, but sadly this is not to be. Our committee member Malcolm Ayton lost both his mother and his wife Jean within a few days of each other. I am sure that you would want me to pass on the condolences of the whole of the Ayton Family Society to Malcolm and his family.

David

## OBITUARIES

**JEAN RATTRAY AYTON (née McIlree)**  
6th March 1950 - 13th March 2011

Jean passed away peacefully at St John's Hospital, Livingston, with husband Malcolm and son Paul at her bedside.

Married to Malcolm since 1972, she hailed from Johnstone, Renfrewshire, a bit closer to the Lanarkshire Aytons than where she lived for the last 19 years in Balerno, Edinburgh.

Jean will be missed at our annual Ayton family gathering.

Malcolm Ayton

**JOAN AYTON (née King)**  
20th March 1923 - 24th February 2011

Joan died at Glasgow Western Hospital from Parkinson's disease. Born in Cardiff, Joan lived there until she moved to Glasgow when she married James Ayton in 1944. A woman with many interests and hobbies, she was a talented bowler and an excellent card player - her passion was bridge.

Joan had two sons, David and Malcolm, and three grandchildren and four great-grandchildren, with two more on the way.

Malcolm Ayton

*Our sincerest condolences to Malcolm Ayton, who lost both his wife and his mother recently.*

## NEW AYTON WEBSITE

Malcolm Ayton

We are excited to say that we will be launching a completely revamped Ayton Family Society website in the very near future.

Fronting the website will be a general information page with a link for members to access newsletter issues past and present, heraldic pages and space to leave comments, etc. Members and visitors will be able to email the Convener, Secretary and Newsletter Editor using an [aytonfamilysociety.org](mailto:aytonfamilysociety.org) mail address.

We very much hope that you like our new offering which we intend to develop every year with more functions.

Members will shortly get instructions as to how to log on. It's important for those who have an email address to keep the Secretary up to date with any changes.

Thanks to Alan McIlree for his work in putting together such a good site.

## AYTON NEWS

We have received news concerning some Society members.

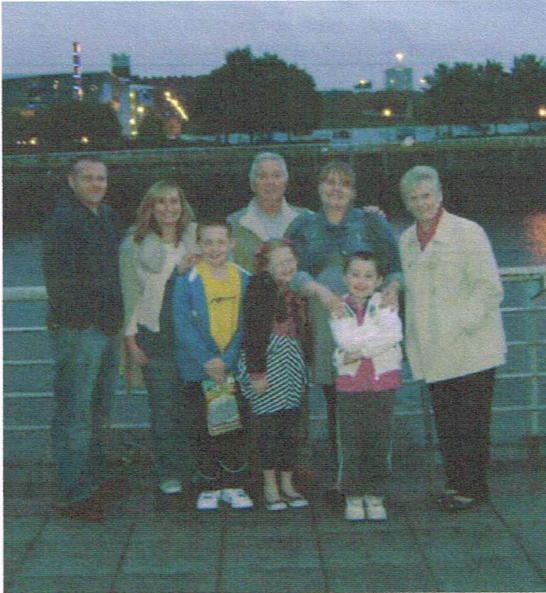
### *Happy birthday!*

Robert Aytoun Girling was born on July 20th 1941 in Edinburgh, eldest son of Frank and Elizabeth Girling. He trained in horticulture at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Edinburgh, and then worked in social care and ran homes for elderly people (Cheshire Homes, Leicestershire County Council, and Thornfield House, Selkirk). Now retired, Robert is resident in Gozo, Malta, although he will be celebrating his 70th birthday in Edinburgh, Scotland.

**Happy retirement!**

Malcolm Ayton has recently retired. After a busy week finishing everything off at work, he began his new career at the weekend: babysitting, all day Saturday and most of Sunday!

Our best wishes for a very happy birthday to Robert and for a long and happy retirement to Malcolm.



**Family gathering**

Malcolm Ayton reports on a family get-together, with a photo of eight - shortly to be ten - Aytons out in Glasgow in June.

The adults, left to right, are Stuart, Amanda, David, Karen and Anne. Children, left to right, are Kerr, Camryn and Dillon. It was a rare occasion - David was paying for the meal!

David and Anne's daughter Karen normally lives in Dublin but was in Glasgow to visit her family. David is from the Lanarkshire line of Aytons, a descendant of James Ayton of Farnell, Angus, Scotland, 1749.

**NO AYTON FOR THE 2012 OLYMPICS**

*David Eaton*



I'm sure all Aytons were pleased to follow the fortune of one of their namesakes, Sarah Ayton, during both the 2004 and 2008 Olympics, where she

won a Gold Medal at both games. Sadly Sarah has decided not to compete at the 2012 games.

Sarah, who now lives in Weymouth, was born at Ashford, Middlesex, in 1980. She has proved to be one of Britain's best ever competitive sailors, having won at least 47 medals at major events, this total being made up of 19 gold, 13 silver and 15 bronze medals.

Sarah began sailing when a family friend took her for a sail at the Queen Mary Sailing Club in Staines, Middlesex - when she was only six years old, and as the saying goes 'she took to it like a duck to water.'

Sarah came to the notice of the non-sailing public when she was the youngest member of Shirley Robertson's crew when they won a Gold Medal in the Yngling yachting class at the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, the national press having christened them 'three blondes in a boat.' For this Sarah also received

a gong of a very different kind when she was awarded an MBE.

Success continued over the next four years and then we found Sarah competing at the 2008 Olympics in Beijing. Once again Sarah did not let the GB team down, winning her second Gold in what was described at the time as 'Great Britain's best Olympic performance for 100 years.' For this Sarah's MBE was upgraded to an OBE in the 2009 New Year's Honours List.

However, Sarah had more incentive than most to win a Gold Medal in Beijing. By now she was engaged to fellow Olympian, windsurfer Nick Dempsey, and she and her fiancé had made a bet agreeing to take the surname of whoever won a gold medal. Nick tried very hard but his bronze did not match Sarah's second gold (I think they compromised and both kept their own names).

Although the Yngling class has been removed from the programme for the 2012 London Olympics Sarah was expected to compete in the 470 class (two blonds in a boat), and indeed was in training for this event, the hope being that this time she and husband Nick would both win gold on home territory. However, it is not to be. In February Sarah announced her

retirement from Olympic racing and goodbye to her hope of that third gold medal (which would likely have given her a CBE or maybe she would have been made a Dame). Sarah, who is now a young mother, has decided that family is more important than fame. She said 'To succeed at the highest level as an Olympic athlete you ultimately have to be pretty single-minded, and that's something that just doesn't sit happily when you're a mum as well. Winning gold is what Olympic sailing is all about, so working towards 2012 and feeling like I can't give it my full attention has made me question why I am doing it, especially when it involves missing out on important time with Thomas. Full engagement is what makes the difference between being average and being great, in Olympic sport or whatever aspect of life. I am really looking forward to focusing my time and energy on Thomas, who's now 19 months old and into everything, and to supporting Nick, who is working harder than ever on his own Olympic campaign.'

Although we may not have an Ayton to follow at the 2012 Olympics I'm sure we all wish Sarah all the best for the future and hope that when Thomas grows up he will appreciate what a good mother he has.

## **FARNELL BY BRECHIN, ANGUS, SCOTLAND**

*Malcolm Ayton*

Farnell is a small quiet hamlet of perhaps 30 homes in the rolling farmland between Brechin and Arbroath, Angus. It is dominated by a Kirk on a hillock surrounded by a cemetery. The present church building dates from 1806. The mediaeval church was dedicated to St Ninian and its priest was *ex officio* Dean of Brechin.

The only shop is the House of Farnell selling fancy goods and soft home furnishings. The shop was surprisingly busy when I visited on a sunny Saturday.

The local landmark of note is Kinnaird Castle a 19th-century mansion house which stands on the site of earlier castles destroyed by fire in the 10th and 19th centuries. It has been the home of the Earl and

Countess of Southesk for 600 years. It was enlarged and remodelled in 1860 by the architect David Bryce (1803-76).

The castle offers views over Strathmore and the Grampian mountains and is surrounded by 1300 acres of deer park, woodlands, trout farms and arable land. The castle is famed for its art collection, including works by Jamesone, Raphael, Murillo, Durer, Vandyck, Raeburn, Landseer and Lucas Cranach.

All very well and good but what does Farnell have to do with the Aytons? I'm afraid that we don't have any claim to the castle or its artworks! However David and Malcolm Ayton can trace their lineage back to 1749, when a James Ayton resided there.

Interestingly, despite the geographical closeness, James Ayton's descendents do not have the DNA of the Aytouns of Inchdairnie, Fife but that of the Lanarkshire Aitons. It is likely therefore that James Ayton was a journeyman tradesman or itinerant

labourer and may have worked at the castle or on one of many farms in the surrounding area.

I searched the cemetery for evidence of Aytons but unfortunately - or should that be fortunately? - there was no trace of any of our family.



Farnell Church, Farnell, Angus

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## ***AN AITON GRAVE FROM THE SECOND WORLD WAR***

*Stephanie Robertson*



During the Second World War, as British troops advanced east in the second half of 1944, my father spent some time at Leopoldsburg in the province of Limburg in the east of Belgium. Consequently, when I was recently in the area I took some photos so he could see how it looks today. The town holds the largest military establishment in Belgium and was a key site in the allied advance.

The photo shows the tranquil surroundings of the

Leopoldsburg war cemetery. There are about 35 original burials here, associated with isolated engagements in or near the town in May 1940. Commonwealth forces did not return to the area until September 1944. A number of burials are from a military hospital that was established at Leopoldsburg during the latter part of 1944 and others were brought into the cemetery from the surrounding district. A famous name associated with the cemetery is that of the Marquess of Hartington, the brother-in-law of President Kennedy. The Marquess served as a major in

the Coldstream Guards and was killed on 10 September 1944 while trying to capture the nearby village of Heppen, which was held by the SS.

Among the graves is that of Guardsman Alexander Aiton, aged 24, of the Scots Guards. Alexander Aiton was killed at the age of 24 on 9 September 1944 in heavy fighting at Hechtel to the east of Leopoldsburg.

The 32nd Guards Brigade of the Guards Armoured Division (made up of troops from 2nd Reconnaissance Battalion Welsh Guards, 1st Battalion Welsh Guards and X Company, 4th Battalion Scots Guards) reached Hechtel on 7 September 1944 and attempted to capture it but were forced to fall back. They made a second attempt the following day. Alexander Aiton must have been killed in the fighting described below.

'The Scottish troops were able to cross the Hechtel-Leopoldsburg road and set up their company headquarters in the northwestern part of the town. Somewhat later, the Scottish troops also succeeded in crossing the Hechtel-Eindhoven road and capturing the eastern part of the town. Meanwhile, the Welsh troops attempted to capture the western part of the town, but German defences here were tough and all attempts to reach the central crossroads failed, as well as attempts to link up with the Scots Guards. Heavy fighting took place in the night of 8-9 September.

'The Guards Armoured Division (30th Corps), more specifically the 32nd Guards Brigade, continued the heavy battle for Hechtel on 9 September. Despite sending an extra company as reinforcements, the Welsh Guards were unable to link up with the Scots Guards. Even though the Welsh succeeded in crossing the Hechtel-Leopoldsburg road and occupying the houses near the church, attempts to reach the key crossroads were unsuccessful. At around 3 p.m. the Scots Guards were dislodged from some of their positions by a heavy German attack. Tanks, however, did succeed in reaching the Scots Guards and resupplying them. With the help of newly arrived troops, the Germans launched a heavy counterattack in late afternoon, capturing the main Scots Guards strongpoint and forcing the Welsh Guards to withdraw.'

On 12 September the Guards Armoured Division (30th Corps) finally managed to capture Hechtel after a long and bitter struggle<sup>1</sup>.

***AYTONS IN ENGLAND IN THE 1881  
CENSUS INDEX***  
*Stephanie Robertson*

Recent newsletters have included some more detailed maps of the location of Aytons and Eatons in Scotland in the middle of the 18th century. The data is based on Church of Scotland baptisms.

The 1881 census map program makes it possible to map the location of people in England in 1881 by Poor Law Union, a union of several parishes used for administration of the Poor Law Act. The program does not provide such detailed data for Scotland.

Such detail is of interest because it is possible to show the areas where there were high concentrations of Aytons within the local population,

which are likely to indicate the places where Aytons originated.

The surname Ayton shows a high concentration in Norfolk, where there is a parish called Eaton close to Norwich. There are also high concentrations in County Durham and the North Riding of Yorkshire. The North Riding of Yorkshire contains the village of Great Ayton, the location of the Society's gathering in 2005.

Other locations probably indicate migration from these two areas. The migrants include Aytons from

<sup>1</sup> <http://users.telenet.be/Atlantikwall-15tharmy/Liberation.htm>.

Scotland. Many of them are found close to industrial centres, where they had evidently moved for work.

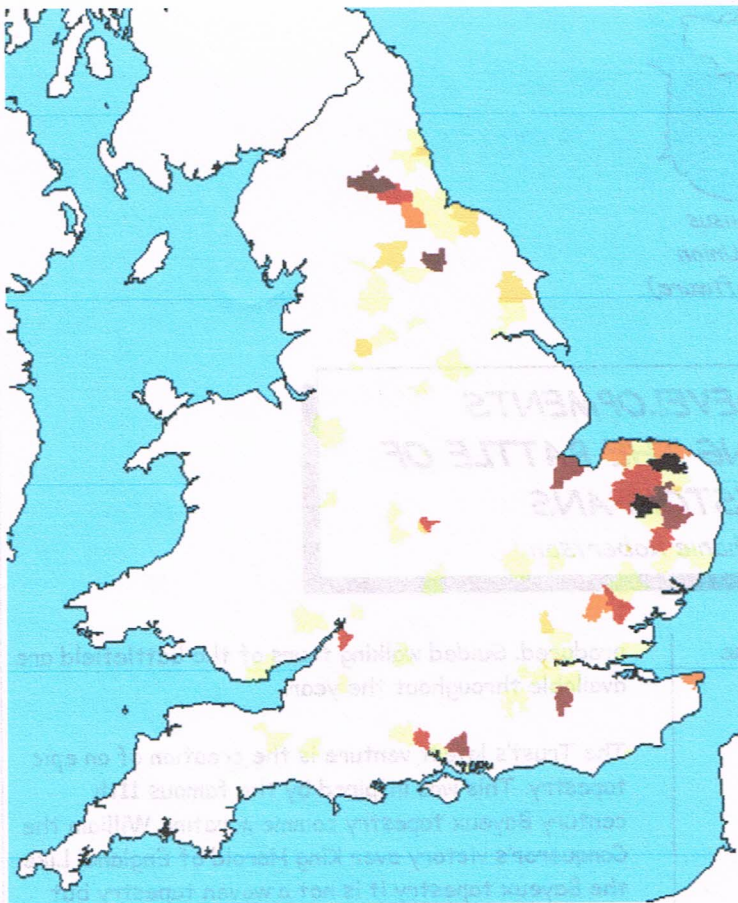
Evidence suggests that in England, as well as in Scotland, there is some merging of the names Ayton and Eaton.

The name Eaton is more frequent than Ayton, but there is not enough space to deal with it in this issue.

A fascinating possible variation not found in Scotland is the name Eighteen, which may well have sprung from the name Ayton/Eaton in Suffolk.

There is a one-name study on the name Eighteen. The name first appears in Hadleigh in Suffolk in 1667. The researcher comments 'some EIGHTEENS have variously been described as AITON, AYTON, AYTEEN, EATON, ETEEN, EATEEN, EIGHTEN or EYTON. This is not an exhaustive list of the mis-translations and diversions of the name, and for some, EATON, ETEEN, AYTON and EATEEN have become the surnames used by some descendants of EIGHTEENS, but research is still continuing on this.'

See The Guild of One-Name Studies website:  
<http://www.one-name.org/profiles/eighteen.html>



Ayton in the 1881 census index			
County	Poor Law Union	Actual	per 100 000 of the population
NFK	Aylsham	55	305
NFK	Wayland	20	187
DUR	Weardale	26	147
NFK	Forehoe	15	125
YKS	Thirsk	14	109
NFK	Depwade	19	81
LIN	Holbeach	11	57
HAM	Droxford	6	54
SRY	Godstone	9	51
HAM	Romsey	5	47
NFK	Mitford	11	40
SFK	Hartismere	6	38
DUR	Auckland	30	36
ESS	Braintree	10	35
WAR	Foleshill	6	32
GLS	Dursley	4	32
NFK	Swaffham	4	31
NFK	Erpingham	6	30
Other		522	
Total		779	

Ayton in England and Wales in the 1881 census index, per 100 000 people, data by Poor Law Union

(Archer Software)



*Eighteen in England and Wales in the 1881 census index, per 100 000 people, data by Poor Law Union  
(Archer Software)*

Eighteen in the 1881 census index			
County	Poor Law Union	Actual	per 100,000 <
SFK	Cosford	10	64
BRK	Reading	25	57
BRK	Wokingham	7	35
SFK	Sudbury	6	20
Other		7	
Total		55	

## **NEW DEVELOPMENTS CONCERNING THE BATTLE OF PRESTONPANS**

*Stephanie Robertson*

It appears that documented Ayton involvement in the Jacobite uprising relates to a regiment that was raised after the Battle of Prestonpans on 21 September 1745 when Prince Charles Edward Stuart's army achieved victory over British Government forces. However, in view of this Ayton involvement, it is of some interest to mention some developments relating to the Battle of Prestonpans.

In 2006 the Battle of Prestonpans 1745 Heritage Trust was formed to campaign for the proper recognition and interpretation of the battle. Its aim is to create a permanent living history centre close to the battle site. In the meantime it has devised a number of projects and activities to increase understanding of the battle. Re-enactments take place on the anniversary of the battle; there is a programme of schools visits and storytelling events and several books, murals and games have been

produced. Guided walking tours of the battlefield are available throughout the year.

The Trust's latest venture is the creation of an epic tapestry. This was inspired by the famous 11th century Bayeux tapestry commemorating William the Conqueror's victory over King Harold of England. Like the Bayeux tapestry it is not a woven tapestry but embroidery, consisting of 102 panels each measuring 1 metre x 46 cm.

Each panel shows a different aspect of Prince Charles's journey from his home in Rome; by ship from France to Eriskay; through the Highlands to Edinburgh and to victory over the Hanoverian army at Prestonpans. Each panel has been meticulously researched and designed.



The work was carried out by over 200 volunteers from communities associated with the Prince's journey to Prestonpans.

For more information and illustrations of the panels see:

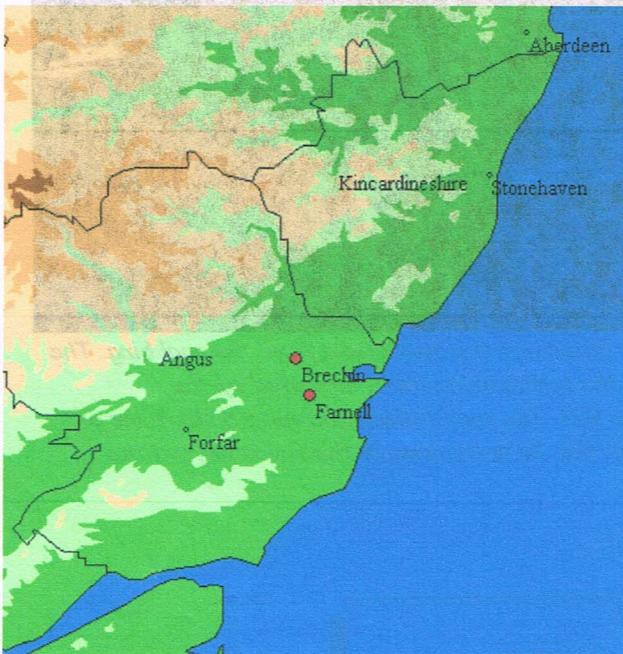
<http://www.prestonpanstapestry.org/tapestry/>

### *Aitons among the Jacobites*

The Jacobite army lists show that two Aitons were rounded up after disaster befell the Jacobite army at Culloden. These were two sergeants in the Forfarshire Regiment (Ogilvy's). They submitted to the authorities and were presumably eventually allowed to go home again.

James Aiton (2nd battalion), mason, Caldham, Brechin

John Aiton (2nd battalion), Kinraig, Brechin.



*Location of Aytons/Aitons in Angus mentioned in this issue. Is there a connection between the Aitons of Brechin and the Aytons of Farnell?*

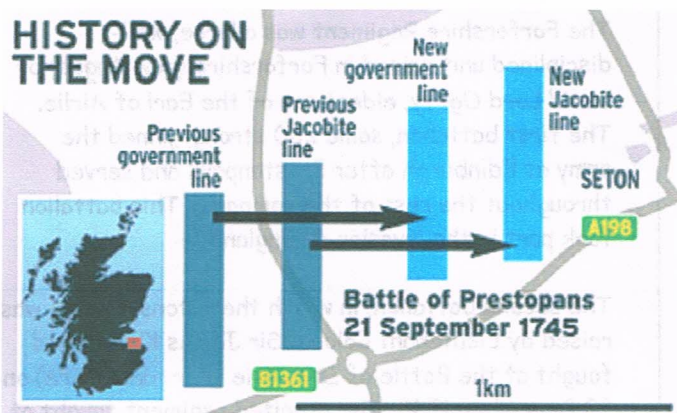
The Forfarshire Regiment was a large, well-disciplined unit raised in Forfarshire (now Angus) by David Lord Ogilvy, eldest son of the Earl of Airlie. The first battalion, some 200 strong, joined the army at Edinburgh after Prestonpans and served throughout the rest of the campaign. This battalion took part in the invasion of England.

The second battalion, in which the Aitons served, was raised by Lieutenant Colonel Sir James Kinloch and fought at the Battle of Inverurie (Aberdeenshire) on 23 December 1745. The reunited regiment fought at Falkirk and Culloden. The regiment was regarded as the best drilled and disciplined unit raised by the Jacobites. It retreated intact from the field of Culloden and proceeded to the rendezvous at Ruthven Barracks.

### *The archaeology of the Battle of Prestonpans*

The Battle of Prestonpans 1745 Trust, which has been behind the initiatives to raise the battle's profile, approached the Centre for Battlefield Archaeology with a view to discovering the extent and condition of vestiges of the battle and with the hope of involving the local community in related projects.

Excavations and metal detector surveys were carried out in the area where the battle had traditionally thought to have taken place; the two armies were thought to have faced each other across the coal waggonway from Cockenzie to Tranent, with the government army to the west and the Jacobite army to the east. Surveys carried out across the fields adjacent to the waggonway and further east towards Seton revealed concentrations of shot further east than had been anticipated, with projectiles that could be identified as being fired by the government troops and Jacobite troops respectively. At the beginning of the battle, the Jacobite army had lined up much closer to the (now vanished) village of Seton than had been thought.



*Revised locations of the government army and the Jacobite army at the beginning of the Battle of Prestonpans, following an archaeological survey of the battlefield. Sir John Cope, the government commander, had to swing his army round to face the Jacobite army, which successfully made a surprise approach from the rear. The coal waggonway ran between the battle locations previously identified. Both armies crossed the waggonway when the government army subsequently fled to the west, pursued by the Jacobite army.*



*A view looking towards the Firth of Forth, Cockenzie, Port Seton and the battlefield from the coal bing. The line of the old coal waggonway, previously thought to mark the battlefield site, is indicated by the hedgerows emerging from the trees in the distance, centre left. The road follows the more distant line of trees to the right. The government army was confronted by the Jacobite army in the fields beyond the pylon to the right.*

## THE LAST WORD

Bill Eaton always ended with the last word, so I will follow his example.

I hope you have found something of interest in this newsletter. Contributions are very welcome and can be sent by e-mail to me at [stephr@pt.lu](mailto:stephr@pt.lu) or by post to the Secretary:

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