



The Ayton Family Society

President – Pieter Cor Aitton

CONVENOR'S LETTER

Believe it or not I wrote this convenor's letter, except this first paragraph, on New Year's morning. However things don't always work out as you expect. More of my time than I expected has been taken up helping my younger son and his wife renovate the house they have bought as their first permanent home. Also my 92-year-old mother-in-law had a fall and broke a bone in her pelvis, so a trip to Orkney was required. Anyway I have decided to leave the original first paragraph in, but add that I hope you all had a good Easter.

New Year's Day is a day when I'm sure that we are all thinking about family and as half of my household are in bed - no not with hangovers, but with the flu - I decided that it was time for me to write my convenor's letter to our Ayton family members scattered around the globe.

19th August 2012 saw us hold a successful, if small, gathering and AGM at Fernie Castle in central Fife. Fernie Castle, now a hotel, is close to where the senior branch of the Ayton family were settled after the Berwickshire lands of Ayton passed out of the family through an heiress. Sadly Alison and John Sones, who had travelled up from the West Midlands had to make a last minute call off. Alison had become unwell during Saturday night while staying at a hotel in nearby Glenrothes. Alison just wanted to get home and John made sure that they both got home safely. We missed you both, especially as you are amongst our most loyal supporters.

I make no apology for the long gap between Newsletters; I have appealed before for members to send in articles about any family research they have

done, no matter how large or small. If you don't think that you have anything interesting to add about yourself, or any member of your family, past or present, then give us something about your hobbies or interests. You never know; there may be another member with the same interest, or who would like to get involved in the same hobby but does not know how to get started.

That brings me to something that I promised to reveal about myself to the members who attended the Gathering, so I better keep my word and make my confession now. Eileen, my wife, has no interest in computers so I can look at anything I like without interference. I'm sure that you have all heard of computer dating and I'm afraid that during the autumn of 2011 I saw a photo of a lovely lady who had just recently arrived in England from Australia. Although Betsy had lived all her life in Australia she actually started life in Canada, leaving Toronto for the Southern Hemisphere when only weeks old. After several emails I arranged to travel south to Newent, just outside Gloucester to meet Betsy and, as you have probably guessed, I was besotted. The outcome of this was that I arranged to come back a few weeks later and bring her home with me to Scotland. So after convincing Eileen (actually I'm not sure that she is convinced) that even if the neighbours talked, soon everyone would accept that Betsy is now just part of the family. Now I don't know what you will think of me, or Betsy, but I have enclosed a photo of us (photo on page 6) in the hope that you will understand.

David

ANNUAL GATHERING 2012

The Gathering was held on Sunday 19th August 2012, and we gathered at Fernie Castle Hotel, Fife, Scotland. The choice was influenced by the proximity of the hotel to a group of historic sites within a couple of miles. These sites have relevance to the history of the Ayton family at various sites in Fife, particularly those around Dunmore or Denmuir, set in the hills of northern Fife, a few miles south of the Firth of Tay.

Present were Ruth Hastings, Archie Aiton, Zena Aiton, Bill Aiton, David Eaton, Hamish Neilson, and Marion Aiton. Apologies were received from Cor and Fok Aitton, Alison Eaton, Ian Eaton, Margaret Hambleton, Robert Girling, Stephanie Robertson, Alison Neilson, Rosamund Breyer-Aiton and Malcolm Ayton. Alison and John Sones had intended to come to the Gathering, but were prevented from travelling at the last minute by illness.

The Convenor, David Eaton, welcomed members and partners to the meeting. David noted that, while the website was functioning, only slow progress was being made with developing it. He again cited the inspiring one from Orkney. Malcolm Ayton had spoken to his brother-in-law, who had established the website, about expanding the range of spellings of the Ayton name that are recognised, but that had proved difficult to do. David had been working on heraldry information, but he had mislaid the draft, which still had to be completed. There was also a problem that members need to re-register with the website at each visit. He noted that origination of the site, and the first year had cost £525.

The Newsletter had continued to be produced, under the new hand of Stephanie Robertson, our historian. Our thanks were again expressed to her for taking on this role. It was noted, as so often before, that the Newsletter needs contributions from members, on any relevant matter.

David Eaton referred to the suggestion for an index of historic names and details, available only to members. It was agreed that the Secretary should consult the Scottish Genealogy Society for advice. Alison Sones had reported very few enquiries about genealogy in the last 4 years, and she had handed the boxes of documents

(originally produced by Sheina Thomson) back to David, who had begun the job of sifting through them.

David noted that Ayton Castle was still advertised for sale and it was agreed to write to Lady Christine de la Rue to seek information about the situation, with regard to the Family Room. David understood that arrangements had been made to exhume bodies from graves at the Castle.

The Secretary and Treasurer, Hamish Neilson, spoke about the Accounts, which showed a balance of £3,875. It was agreed that we should seek higher rates of interest on much of these funds; other savings accounts were suggested. The accounts were approved subject to having them examined independently. It was noted that it can be costly to transfer money from other countries - the Secretary was investigating what measures might be available, such as IBAN.

The Secretary and Treasurer reported the sad news that two members had died - Graham Peter Ayton, and Clara Allison Scott Aiton. The members present expressed their sympathies.

Bryan Ayton had been in touch asking for a copy of any information on members' DNA profiling. David Eaton agreed to search for a copy of the study initiated by Sheina Thomson several years ago.

Howard Aiton from Canada had offered a draft article for the Newsletter. This would be discussed with Stephanie Robertson. There had been correspondence with Douglas Wolfe, Gerry Aiton Rowe, Gerald Auten, and Richard Aytoun.

The re-election of the existing Office Bearers and Committee was proposed by MA, seconded by BA, and agreed unanimously, although it was stressed that more members would be welcomed. Convenor is therefore David Eaton, Secretary and Treasurer Hamish Neilson, with the sole Committee member being Malcolm Ayton.

It was noted that according to custom we should be returning to Ayton Castle next year, preferably on 11th August 2013. It was agreed that the Secretary would contact Lady Christine de la Rue to confirm whether this date was possible, and to make sure access to the Family Room was available. It was also agreed to write to Bill Black, the Chair of the Ayton Community Hall to ask him to the event. At this point the formal business ended.

After the meeting we set off to visit the nearby Aytoun Smiddy (Blacksmith's Forge) and the nearby farm steadings of Ayton, Denmuir or Dunmore, and

Aytonhill. We left Fernie Castle behind; it is a fine 16th century fortified tower house with 17th century and latter additions, it is now run as a family hotel. During the 15th century Fernie belonged to the family of Fernie of that Ilk, who retained it until it passed through an heiress to the Lovells of Balumbie. The Lovells then sold it in 1580 to a cadet line of an old Fife family, the Arnots of that Ilk. They then retained it for about a century before it passed to Lord Balfour of Burleigh.

Why Fernie? In 1507 the neighbouring lands of Nether Dunmore were given by King James IV to his faithful servant Andrew Ayton, captain of Stirling Castle. On the death of Andrew's elder brother, the last Ayton laird of Ayton in Berwickshire, Andrew became head of the family, or clan, of Ayton. The Aytons retained the lands of Nether Dunmore until 1723. They had the name of their estate changed to Ayton, which it still retains to this day. Andrew is also the progenitor of all the well-known branches of the Ayton clan, the Aytouns of Inchdairnie, Kinaldy, Kippo, etc. From this we can see that Nether Dunmore/Ayton was effectively the headquarters of Ayton family for over 200 years and during this time the Aytons must have had many contacts with their near neighbours at Fernie.

At Denmuir there is a large coat of arms mounted in the wall of what is now a semi-derelict farm building. Unfortunately it does not appear to be an Ayton relic, but the surrounding countryside and Fernie Castle made a lovely setting for our gathering.

Hamish Neilson

June 2013



Fernie Castle

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WILLIAM JAMES HUTTON EATON

We are very sorry to report the death of one of our long serving members WILLIAM (BILL) EATON who died in Edinburgh on 3rd January.

Bill, spent his early life in the former border county of Peeblesshire, originally in Peebles itself and then in Innerleithen. Bill left the county of his birth when he was called up for National Service, which he served in the RAF. On demob in 1955 Bill settled in Edinburgh. He joined the staff of Ferranti at Crew Toll where he was to spend the rest of his working life. Bill was strong willed and not frightened to stick to his principles; this, along with a thorough knowledge of his chosen profession, saw Bill rise to be the head of the laboratory, a very responsible job within such a large organization.

Bill, a former editor of our Newsletter, along with his wife Margaret, was a regular attender at our Gatherings. Even when ill health made it difficult for him, he still managed to come to our Gathering at Ayton Castle in 2010.

Several members of the Ayton Family Society attended Bill's funeral. We as a society offer sincere condolences to Margaret and all the family for their sad loss.

THE EAST OF FIFE RAILWAY

In 1845 a company was set up to establish a railway to serve the east part of Fife. The provisional committee of this company consisted mostly of the rich and powerful members of the east Fife community. This committee included Roger Sinclair Aytoun, Esquire of Inchdairnie, &c. &c., the last recognised chief of the name of Ayton.

We are indebted for the following article to Dennis Bell, a member of the Fife Family History Society whose ancestors belonged to the Fife coast town of Largo.

Prospectus OF THE EAST OF FIFE RAILWAY. 1845
CAPITAL £250,000 IN 10,000 SHARES of £25 EACH.
DEPOSIT £2:10s PER SHARE

PROVISIONAL COMMITTEE.

Sir WINDHAM CARMICHAEL ANSTRUTHER of Anstruther and Carmichael, Bart. O. TYNDAL BRUCE, Esquire of Falkland and Nuthill, Convener of the County of Fife. General ALEXANDER GRAHAM STIRLING of Duchray and Auchyle, &c. &c. JAMES MAITLAND HOG, Esquire of Kellie and Newliston. WINDHAM ANSTRUTHER, Esquire. CHARLES CRAIGIE HALKETT, Esquire of Halhill and Coates. ROGER SINCLAIR AYTOUN, Esquire of Inchdairnie, &c. &c. JAMES WYLD, Esquire of Gilston. LAWRENCE BUCHAN, Esquire of Balchrystie, Manchester. EAGLE HENDERSON, Esquire, Coates Crescent, Edinburgh. HENRY RAEBURN, Esquire of Saint Bernards. Captain A. CHRYSTIE of Elie Lodge. HENRY GEORGE WATSON, Esquire, Accountant, Edinburgh, Factor on Newburn. ROBERT BELL, Esquire, Banker, Edinburgh. ALEXANDER JAMIESON, Esquire, Accountant, Edinburgh, Factor on Newburn. GEORGE DUNCAN, Esquire, Balchrystie. JOHN WOOD, Esquire, Banker, Colinsburgh. JOSEPH TOSH, Esquire of Over Kellie. GEORGE DAIRSIE, Chief Magistrate of Anstruther Easter. JAMES YOUNG, Chief Magistrate of Anstruther Wester. JOHN PETER, Esquire, Kirkland Works, Leven. DAVID NICOL, Esquire, Banker, Leven. THOMAS GREIG, Esquire, Merchant, Manchester. JOHN ANDERSON, Builder and Contractor, Leven. PETER BONTHRON, Merchant, Leven. WILLIAM WILKIE, Chief Magistrate, Pittenweem. D. and J. WELSH, Fish-Curers, Pittenweem. ROBERT GREIG, Merchant and Fish-Curer, Anstruther. ANDREW MACKIE, Farmer and Brewer, Saint Monance. JOHN CURRIE and SONS, Builders, Elie. ANDREW BEALE, Manufacturer and Merchant, Elie. ANDREW CURRIE, Merchant, Kirkcaldy. DAVID DAND, Largo Spinning-Mills. With power to add to their number.

BANKERS The COMMERCIAL BANK of SCOTLAND, and its Branches. The CITY of GLASGOW BANK, and its Branches.

AGENT AND INTERM SECRETARY. JAMES LAWSON HILL, W.S., Edinburgh.

PARLIAMENTARY AGENTS. Messers DEANS, DUNLOP, and HOPE, Fludyer Street, London

This Company is formed with the view of extending the benefits of Railway Communication to the district lying on the South and Eastern Coast of Fife, from the Edinburgh and Northern Railway to the burgh of Anstruther.

The length of the Line will be twenty miles, and it can be carried eastward either by the Valley of the Orr or the Leven, as may be ultimately fixed by the Engineer. If along the Orr, it will leave the Edinburgh and Northern Railway near Thornton, and if by the Leven at or near Markinch. In either case it will pass by or near Cameron Bridge, Kennoway, Leven, Largo, Kirkton of Largo, Newburn, Colinsburgh, Kilconquhar, earls Ferry, Elie, St Monance, Pittenweem, and terminate at the Harbour of Anstruther.

The whole of this district, and that of Kingsbarns and Crail, lying to the eastward, possesses the richest and most fertile soil in Fife, and from the situation on the burghs along the sea coast, it includes a very great proportion of the population of the county.

This Railway will, by means of Lines sanctioned by Parliament, or for which Companies have been formed, and deposits on the stock paid, connect the above towns and district with Kirkcaldy, Kinghorn, Burntisland, Dunfermline, Perth, Cupar, Dundee, St Andrews and other important places.

A general survey of the country has already been made, and it has been found that the works will not only be free from tunnelling or embanking, but of the easiest description.

As the Line will run along sands lying between the different burghs above mentioned for a distance of nearly six miles, it will neither alter the features of the country nor require the purchase of the valuable land which it will accommodate, and will thus be made at a comparatively small cost.

The estimate of revenue, based upon the existing traffic, shows an excellent return for the capital invested.

The passenger traffic at present supports a steamboat plying between Edinburgh and Largo twice a day, carrying on the average 220 passengers, which again employs four coaches from the districts of Anstruther, Elie, St. Andrews and Ceres, for the conveyance of passengers to Largo at its departure and arrival.

There are, besides, two other coaches daily between Anstruther and Edinburgh passing along the whole Line through Kirkcaldy, and crossing the Forth by the Burntisland and Granton Ferry.

There is also a steam-boat belonging to a company in Anstruther which sails between that port and Leith for the carriage of passengers and goods.

In addition to these direct modes of conveyance, two steamboats sail between Granton and Dundee, carrying passengers to and from the intermediate ports of Elie, Pittenweem, and Anstruther.

The Aberdeen steamboats also call four times a week at the same towns, and the Montrose boats twice a week.

The whole of this large passenger traffic by steamboats being subjected to a tedious and often stormy sea voyage, without the benefit of low-water piers, only requires the formation of a Railway to be at once diverted to that mode of conveyance, whereby the comfort of the low-water piers Granton, Burntisland and Queensferry will also be gained.

The number of visitors attracted annually to the watering-places of Wemyss, Leven, Largo, and Elie is at present very great, and, with the advantages of a Railway, will be much increased.

The goods traffic will be no less considerable, and will be supplied by the extensive mills and works on the Line; and by the carriage of coals and lime to the burghs and district eastward of Elie, where at present the carriage of the coals equals the prime cost. The conveyance of fat cattle and sheep to the Edinburgh and Glasgow markets will also form a large source of revenue; these and the agricultural produce of the district being presently conveyed by several sailing packets from the different ports under great disadvantages, and at very heavy charges.

There will likewise be a large sum paid for the carriage of fish from the flourishing fishing ports of Anstruther, Pittenweem, and St Monance to the Edinburgh and Glasgow markets, and to Dundee, Perth, and the inland districts, with which a very extensive trade, employing a large proportion of the population, is at present carried on.

Independent of the white fishing, which is carried on to a very great extent, there are during the herring fishing months no less than from 80 to 120 tons carried

daily to the western and middle districts of the county, and to the markets of Dundee and Perth, almost the whole of which pass over this Line of Railway.

The numerous assurances of support received from the landowners, the principal of whom are upon the Provisional Committee, leave no doubt of the successful issue of the application which will be made to Parliament for an Act of Incorporation in the next session. Indeed it is believed that no undertaking has been presented to Parliament for a length of time which has received more decided support from Landowners, and the promoters have reason to calculate on their unanimous concurrence.

Powers will be sought in such act to allow interest at £4 per cent per annum on all paid-up calls during the progress of the works, and the liability of the Shareholders will be limited to the amount of their subscriptions.

Applications for Shares, in the following form, accompanied by a banker's or other satisfactory reference, may be addressed to the Secretary, or to the following parties and Sharebrokers from whom Prospectuses, &c. may be obtained, viz. Messrs. Higgins and Lang, 14 Austin Friars, Old Broad Street, London; Mr. E. M. Brodie, Liverpool; Mr. George Irvine, Liverpool; Messrs. Bell and Rhodes, Leeds; Messrs. Ridsdales, Myers and Bailey, Leeds; Messrs. Seebohm and Hyland, Manchester; Mr. Henry Benton, Manchester; Messrs. John Robertson and Co., Messrs. Pillans and Home, Mr. William Bell, and Mr. Miller, Edinburgh; Messrs. Foulds and Cockburn, Messrs. McEwan and Auld, and Mr. Peter White, Glasgow; Messrs. Oswald, George, and Company, Aberdeen; David Nicol, Banker, Leven; George Wood, Writer, Colinsburgh; Mr. Conolly, Town-Clerk, Anstruther.

Mr. James L. Hill, W.S.,
Interim Secretary,
8 North St David Street,
25th August 1845



Leven and East of Fife Railway: an embankment and bridge on the trackbed of the Leven and East of Fife Railway at Newark. The railway left the coast here for a more inland route behind St Monans and Pittenweem.

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The Convenor goes for a spin: David and 96-year-old Miss Betsy Ford

TREASURE IN THE ATTIC?

Are any of you descended from William Aytoun who was a silversmith in Edinburgh during the first half of the 18th century? If so you better have a look through all those dusty old boxes in your attic, or maybe find out if there is treasure in a bank vault that has not been opened for years.

I do not know who the above William Aytoun was, but hope some of our members can enlighten us. What I do know is that he must have been one of the leading Edinburgh silversmiths of his day. His work was of the quality you would expect from Hamilton & Inches or one of the top London jewellers today. The evidence for this is shown by the results of two Fine Silver auction sales I came across on the net.

The first of these sales was held on 13th June 2000 by Christies in their King Street premises in London where Lot 231 was described as follows:

A PAIR OF GEORGE II SCOTTISH SILVER SALVERS
Maker's mark of William Aytoun, Edinburgh, 1733. Each shaped square with incurved corners and on four bracket feet, with moulded borders, the centre engraved with a coat-of-arms, crest and motto within foliate mantling, each, marked on reverse, also with scratchweights 25=8 and 26=4. 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (27.3cm.) square. 49ozs. (1536gr.) (2).



Provenance for the pieces was attributed to Geoffery Blackwell (1884-1943) and thence by descent. The sales estimate for the salvers was between £3,500 - £4,500 (\$5,306 - \$6,822). However they achieved over double the lower estimated price selling for £7,285 (\$11,044).

Unfortunately Christies do not tell us whose coat-of-arms is displayed on these pieces as this would give us a good indication of William Aytoun's clientele. They also do not say if the tall jug, Lot 232, photographed between the salvers was by William Aytoun, or what price it was sold for.

The second sale must have been a large one and may not have been confined to silver as it was over a period of three days, from 24th to 26th August 2005. This sale was held by Bonhams in their salerooms at 65 George Street, Edinburgh.

The item which interests us here was Lot No. 3, a silver Chalice described as follows:

A GEORGE II CHALICE, by William Aytoun, Edinburgh 1730, of conventional form, on stepped domed foot, with mid-rib, the plain body with slightly everted rim, engraved to the upper body 'Deo Dicavit Dorothea Sandford Domina De Ferny', repaired, 16cm high, 9cm diameter, weight 7.3oz

Although this item is described as having been repaired it sold for £646.



THE AITONS IN THE USA

The Secretary of the Aytoun Society was very pleased to hear from Gerry Rowe in the USA. Gerry is descended from John Felix Aiton born in 1816 at Shawhead, Stonehouse, Lanarkshire, the son of Thomas Aiton and Jean Mutter. John emigrated to the USA in 1835 and moved to Canada in June of that year. In 1838 he returned to the USA and settled near Cleveland, Ohio. In 1839 he joined the Presbyterian Church of Christ and began preparation for the ministry. He studied at the Mission Institute in Theopolis, Illinois, from 1841 to 1844 and then attended Lane Seminary in Cincinnati, Ohio, from 1845 to 1848. He was licensed to preach by the Cincinnati Presbytery in 1847 and ordained in 1848.

John Aiton married twice and had three children by his first marriage and nine by his second.

John Aiton was the second son of Thomas Aiton in Shawhead, parish of Stonehouse, and Jean Mutter. There were four altogether, William, John, Robert and Thomas, and five daughters.

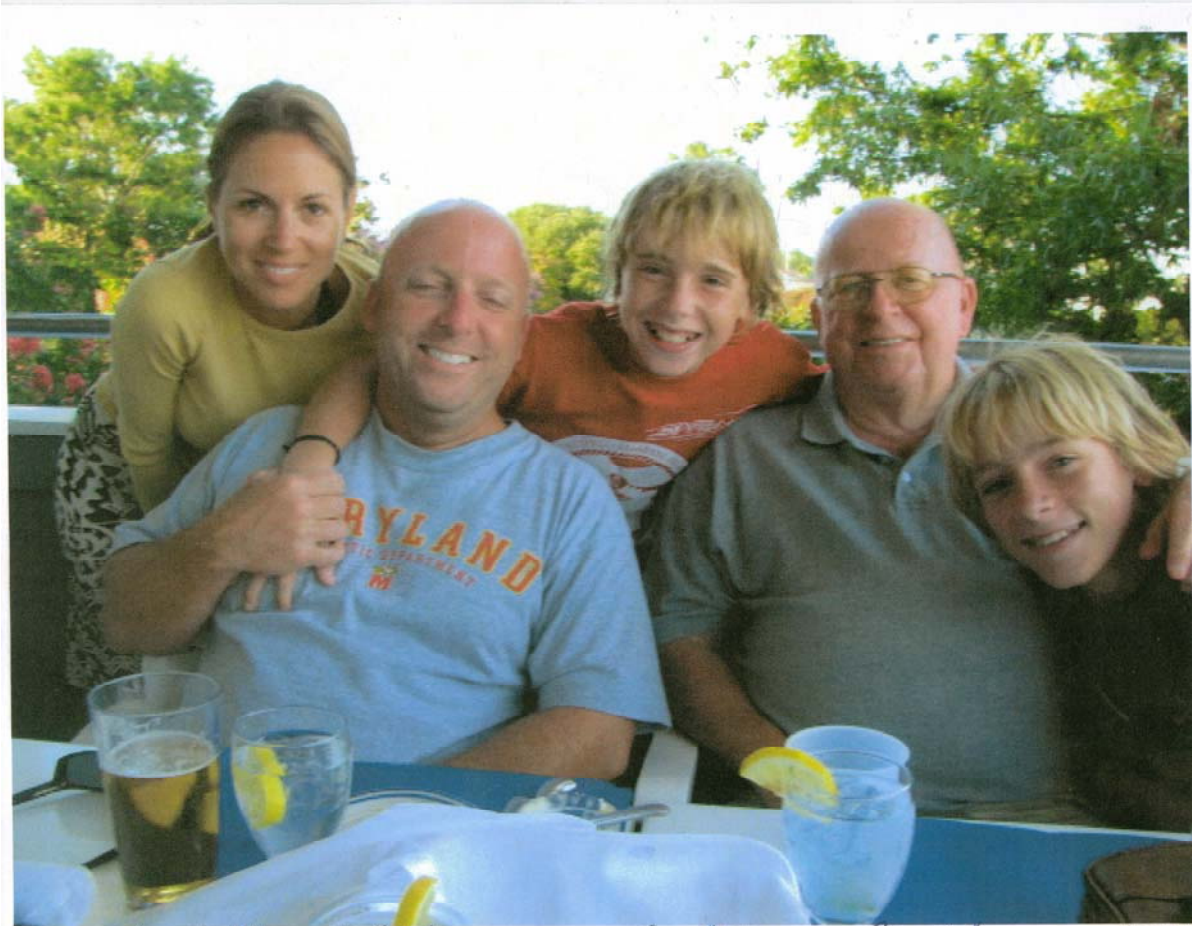
The youngest brother must have been the Thomas Aiton of Stonehouse who also emigrated in 1842. He is next found in Pike County, Illinois, where he married for the first time. He married again after his first wife's death. He had a daughter by his first marriage and four sons by his second marriage. He and his second wife trained as teachers but Thomas later qualified as a doctor; he is described as a physician in the 1880 census when he was living in Travis County, Texas. Thomas died in 1902.

John Aiton, who spent some time with the Dakota Indian Mission, in Minnesota, also returned to Illinois by 1857 and took up teaching. He finally moved to Ten Trees, Minnesota. In 1862 John enlisted in Co. D, 9th Minnesota Regiment, serving three years first in the Indian Wars of Southern Minnesota and then in the Civil War in Tennessee. He died in 1892.

The Aitons in Shawhead were descended from the Lanarkshire family that can be traced back to the middle of the 16th century.

Gerry and her husband Bob have visited Scotland twice, taking in Ayton Castle on both occasions. Bob has produced a watercolour painting of Ayton Castle. Gerry adds that all the Aitons in the USA are descended from the Shawhead Aitons. The Aiton male

line continues through Gerry's brother Bruce, shown here with his family.



Laurell Aiton, Jeff Aiton son of Bruce, Bruce Aiton, Grace Aiton grandpa + my brother, Jack Aiton son of

Bruce is a retired Chief Petty Officer, United States Navy. Now very active in community affairs, Grand Rapids, MN. Jeff and Laurell work for a government agency - six weeks in Germany last year.

-ooOoo-

THE AYTONS AT THE BATTLE OF FLODDEN

The 500th anniversary of the Battle of Flodden falls on 9 September this year. Andrew Ayton of Dunmuir and his eldest son John Ayton of Balcuthy in Fife were killed in the battle, along with their king and thousands of others.

Andrew Ayton was the second son of Ayton of Ayton in the Merse. The senior line of the family was represented by his niece Margaret, who married a Home and passed her lands to her Home descendants. As the second son, Andrew had to make his career elsewhere, which he did successfully. King James IV appointed him Governor of Stirling Castle, an office he held between 1500 and 1509, and he was also Master of Works to the King. The King rewarded him for faithful and good service with grants of land in Fife: Kilgour in 1504, Glenduckie in 1506 and Nether Dunmuir in 1507.

Consequently, when in 1513 James IV decided to declare war on England, his loyal servants the Aytons were bound to support their king.

James had married Margaret, the daughter of King Henry VII of England, but family relationships had deteriorated since the accession of her young brother Henry VIII. In the summer of 1513 Henry had just turned 22. After his protected childhood, his great aspiration was to prove himself as king and warrior. He had already angered James by reviving the old claim to be overlord of Scotland. Henry, however, had turned his attention to France, in the War of the League of Cambrai, where he was aligned with the powers defending Italy and the Pope against the King of France.

Louis XII of France called on James for support as Scotland was France's long-term ally in the Auld Alliance. James decided to support his French ally and sent a herald to his brother-in-law, who was besieging the town of Thérouanne, to ask him to desist from attacking France. Henry of course responded defiantly. James would have anticipated nothing else; when he received Henry's reply in the middle of August he was able to muster an army very quickly. His ally King Louis had sent money, arms and experienced captains to help equip and train the Scottish army.

Estimates of the size of James's army vary greatly, though all agree that it was very large. James's forces were made up of a large number of the noblemen and gentlemen from the southern and eastern parts of Scotland, from as far west as Galloway and as far north as Aberdeenshire. Even the Earl of Argyll came in from the distant west, and the Earl of Atholl from the southern Highlands. Sources currently available do not indicate whether the Aytons came to the muster in the train of a Fife-based nobleman. As Andrew held a royal appointment and owed his preferment to the King, it seems likely that he was in the King's personal entourage.



View of the battlefield from Piper's Hill, the centre of the English line. The Scottish army was spread out along the ridge of Branxton Hill opposite. The Aytons were probably with the King in the central part of the line (further to the left, outside the area shown in the photo).

King James IV and a large part of his army were killed in the boggy ground, now traced by the dip, at the foot of Branxton Hill. Andrew and John Ayton probably died in the same area as the King.

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The campaign got off to a good start. After the initial muster on the Burgh Muir, south of Edinburgh, the army moved south and began the siege of Norham, the great stronghold on the River Tweed of the Prince Bishop of Durham. Much to the Bishop's dismay, the castle fell to the Scottish artillery after five days. The Scottish host then moved on to take the smaller castles of Ford and Etal, both of which were slighted.

Henry VIII had left his wife Catherine of Aragon as Regent in his absence. The Queen's response was swift and assured. The elderly Earl of Surrey, the King's Lieutenant-General in the North advanced northwards, gathering troops from the northern counties of England, while the Queen raised two more armies in the Midlands and the south. The Earl of Surrey held estates in East Anglia and so there is some possibility that one or more English Aytons were among his troops raised by his retainers.

By the time Surrey arrived in Northumberland, the Scottish army was camped in a very strong position on Flodden Edge. Surrey challenged James to battle. Having informed Surrey that it was not his place to challenge a king, James accepted the challenge but refused to move from his strong position. Surrey then decided to march north-east round the Scottish flank. The Scots were uncertain whether he was planning to invade Scotland or simply trying to lure them from their stronghold. On the morning of 9 September, they became aware that Surrey had swung round and begun to approach the Scottish army from the north. The Scots had two choices: they could make haste to cross the Tweed back into Scotland near Coldstream before their line of retreat was cut off or to advance to meet the English army.

In the end the Scots advanced about a mile to Branxton Hill, which was also a very strong position. As Surrey's forces moved south, they suddenly saw the Scottish army drawn up in front of them.

Branxton Hill rises to 350 feet in the east and 500 feet at the western end. The ground falls away steeply before flattening out to about 200-225 feet, with Piper's Hill the highest point at 270 feet. The English army spread along the lower line to the south of Branxton village, taking in Piper's Hill. The hill slopes immediately below the Scots were probably moorland and rough pasture; the land closer to the village was probably arable land, but it is impossible to know whether the harvest had already been brought in.

All accounts agree that the English were outnumbered and that their artillery was lighter. In addition to his artillery, James planned to make use of the advanced pike tactics used to great effect by Swiss soldiers in continental wars.

Lines of battle were swiftly formed and by 4 p.m. battle was ready to commence. It had rained most of the day and the weather was dull and damp and the ground muddy. The battle began with a brisk artillery duel that revealed that the lighter English guns were faster-firing and could be more easily manoeuvred than the Scottish guns. The best Scottish gunners may have been elsewhere with the fleet.

Lord Home and the Earl of Huntly advanced on James's left. They charged to the foot of Branxton Hill to the English right led by the Earl of Surrey's younger son Edmund Howard. The English right collapsed and Edmund Howard was rescued only by a timely intervention by Lord Dacre.

Ever since the battle King James has been held responsible for the disaster because of his impetuous behaviour. A number of years earlier the Spanish ambassador had commented 'He is not a good captain because he begins to fight before he gives his orders'. The strongest criticism came from the Scottish side when, shortly after the battle, the Regent writing in the name of the baby King James V commented 'Impatient at the sight of them our dearest Father keeping no order among his men, from a position in which he could be attacked only with difficulty and danger, boldly rushed down upon the enemy.' But one military historian has commented that James might have decided to change his earlier plan after seeing the success of Home and Huntly on his left. Or his hand may have been forced by the impatience of some of his

leaders and troops. Whatever the reasons for his decision, the results were disastrous.

King James held the right centre, next to the Earls of Crawford and Montrose, who held the left centre. For whatever reason, after the collapse of the English right wing, the two Scottish centre divisions charged down the hill against the English centre. It then became apparent that here the ground was steeper and marshier. The momentum of the charge, which was critical for successful pike tactics was lost, and the lines wavered in confusion. The Scots found themselves sloggng forward in rain and mud to meet an English line armed with the traditional billhooks, which now proved to be deadly. Once the pike attack had failed, the Scots had to rely on swords and axes and were unable to engage the English at close range.

James's division, presumably with the Aytons in its ranks, initially had some success in driving back Surrey's division. But then they too were slowed down by the boggy ground.

On the Scottish right, the Earls of Argyll and Lennox watched the battle unfold. They failed to notice in the miserable weather conditions that Sir Edward Stanley on the English left was approaching from two directions. While sending his troops forward, Stanley had also seen that it was possible to make a concealed movement to the left and up the hill. Stanley launched a massive arrow attack from two directions and was able to force the Scottish right wing to flee the field.

The Earl of Bothwell, who held the Scottish reserve, moved forward to support the King. Stanley swiftly reformed his troops and with Lord Dacre attacked the Scottish reserve from the rear. Stanley and Dacre managed to drive them off and descend on the rear of the Scottish army. James and his troops were now surrounded on three sides. James and the lords around him fought on bravely but eventually James was killed, along with nine earls, 14 lords of Parliament, the Archbishop of St Andrews, many lairds and gentlemen and possibly as many as 10 000 others in the Scottish army. The Aytons probably fell fighting near the King in the boggy ground at the foot of Branxton Hill.

Many of the dead were buried in mass graves at Branxton Church. It is reported that many members of the nobility were buried at Kirk Yetholm, the nearest consecrated ground in Scotland. The Aytons may thus lie there or at Branxton.

Commemorating the battle

A monument was erected on Piper's Hill in 1910 dedicated 'To the brave of both nations'.

A very interesting battlefield trail was created in 2003. A walk around the battlefield gives vivid insights into the tragic events. Information about the trail can be found on: <http://www.flodden.net/>

The 500th anniversary of the battle is being commemorated in a number of events and a permanent memorial in the form of a cross-border ecomuseum. This will link together 12 sites in North Northumberland, the Scottish Borders and Edinburgh that have a connection with the Battle of Flodden. For online information, see: <http://www.flodden1513.com/>.

A series of archaeological investigations has been included in the commemorations. These cover not only

the battlefield but also sites connected with the campaign, including Flodden Edge, where it appears that parts of the fortifications at the Scottish camp have been found.

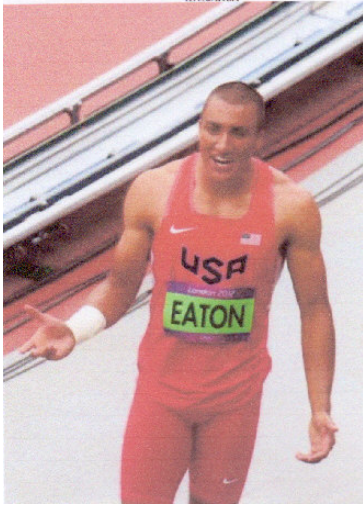
In April of this year a very interesting item was found on the western part of the battlefield. A crown-shaped livery badge, thought to have been worn by a soldier in the personal retinue of King James IV, was discovered by archaeologists during a survey of the site of the Battle of Flodden. The badge is made of copper alloy and appears to have been snapped off a hat band. Its design includes the Fleur de Lys with jewels and diamonds, elements that were part of the Scottish crown in 1513. It has been suggested that it may have been worn by a herald or messenger taking James's instructions to Lord Home and the Earl of Huntly.



Left: St Paul's Church, Branxton, viewed from the Flodden memorial (Copyright Walter Baxter and licensed for reuse under a Creative Commons Licence).

Right: Yetholm Kirk, Kirk Yetholm (Copyright Iain Lees; licensed for reuse under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 2.0 licence). Both churches have been rebuilt since the 16th century. The earlier church at Kirk Yetholm has been described as 'a small dank thatched affair'.

Many of the Flodden dead were buried at Branxton Church. It is believed that Scottish officers were buried at Kirk Yetholm, the nearest church in Scotland. The Aytons may lie at Branxton or at Kirk Yetholm.



ANOTHER GOLD AT THE OLYMPICS

Sadly Sarah Ayton did not defend her sailing gold at the 2012 Olympics in London, but Ashton Eaton captured gold in the decathlon, beating his nearest rival by 198 points.

Ashton who as part of the American team set a new world record for the decathlon during the U.S. Olympic trials which took place in Oregon last June. He then went on to win gold at the big event in London. His total point score in London being 8,869 points.

For sports fans amongst you look out for the name Ashton Eaton. He was only 24 when he competed at the Olympics so he may be around for a while yet.