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**Arms of Ayton of Ayton**

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Motto:  
*"Even when plucked they give out scent"*

# *The Aytons in Berwickshire and Fife*

**James Eaton**

The earliest known progenitor of the Ayton family lived during the 12th century in the South-eastern area of Scotland now called Berwickshire, and had possession of the lands of a "Town" on the River "Eye" in feu from the Priory of Coldingham. His name was Sweyn, and because of this occupancy was known as Sweyn de Eiton, which later became de Ayton. His name, and those of his sons and cousins suggest that they were probably of Danish or Scandinavian origin, and not as is sometimes stated, from a Norman family called de Vesci. Helyas appeared in charters exchanging crofts in Eyemouth for others in Ayton, and Waldeve granted land to the chapel of St. Dionysius at Ayton. Their residence appears to have been a forfeited house called Castlehall, which is believed to have been in the vicinity of the modern Ayton Castle. William de Eyton is mentioned on the Ragman Roll - a list of nobles, lairds, clergy etc. who swore fealty to Edward I at the end of the 13th century. Sweyn's descendants held possession in male succession until the 15th century, when in 1472 John resigned the lands of Ayton and Whytefield to his son in law, George Home, second son of Lord Home (or Hume) and whose line was thereafter known under the name of Home of Ayton. However John had a younger brother, Andrew, who became Captain of Stirling Castle during the reign of James IV, and who was given for good and faithful service, the lands at Dunmuir in north Fife. Andrew had settled there by 1507 as representative of the Aytons of Ayton in the Merse, and from then on the Aytons became a Fifeshire family.

Andrew had three sons who all became Fife lairds in their own right: John of Balcouthie, his heir apparant at Dunmuir, Robert of Inchdairnie, and John of Kinaldy. Both Andrew and his eldest son were killed at the Battle of Flodden in 1513. He was succeeded by his grandson, and two generations later another Andrew received a Royal Charter erecting his lands into a free Barony to be called Ayton. Naming lands after a family instead of the other way round was exceptional, and once again the family was thereafter styled Ayton of Ayton, or Ayton of that Ilk. There were then two Sir Johns, one succeeding the other. The latter married twice and was succeeded by William who sold the Fife estate of Ayton and died without issue. His half-brother Andrew became Provost of Glasgow in 1738, but his successors also died without issue, and this branch of the family became extinct during the 18th century.

Robert, second son of the Captain of Stirling Castle was first Laird of Inchdairnie for which he obtained a feutack from Dunfermline Abbey in 1539, and this branch has been most prolific with some descendants known to be alive today. Other minor branches came from Inchdairnie; Aytoun of Kinglassie, and Aytoun of Grange. John, fifth Laird of Inchdairnie married the grand-daughter of John Napier of Merchiston, mathematician and inventor of logarithms, and their son Alexander, a Jacobite, followed the "play safe" method of support, keeping his eldest son out of the 1715 Rising but sent the rest of his sons to fight for the Stuart cause. The estate was thus not fortified, but two sons went into exile to Russia and another to the Netherlands. The seventh Laird's second son was grandfather of William Edmondstone Aytoun, poet and Professor of English Literature at Edinburgh University until 1865. Major-General Roger Aytoun, ninth Laird's son John was in 1829 served Heir in general to his ancestor Andrew, founder of the Aytons in Fife and was thus recognised as head of the Ayton family or clan, but his son Roger Sinclair Aytoun who was Member of Parliament for the Kirkcaldy Burghs from 1863, sold all his estates in 1901 having no issue, and died in 1904, he being eleventh and last laird of Inchdairnie.

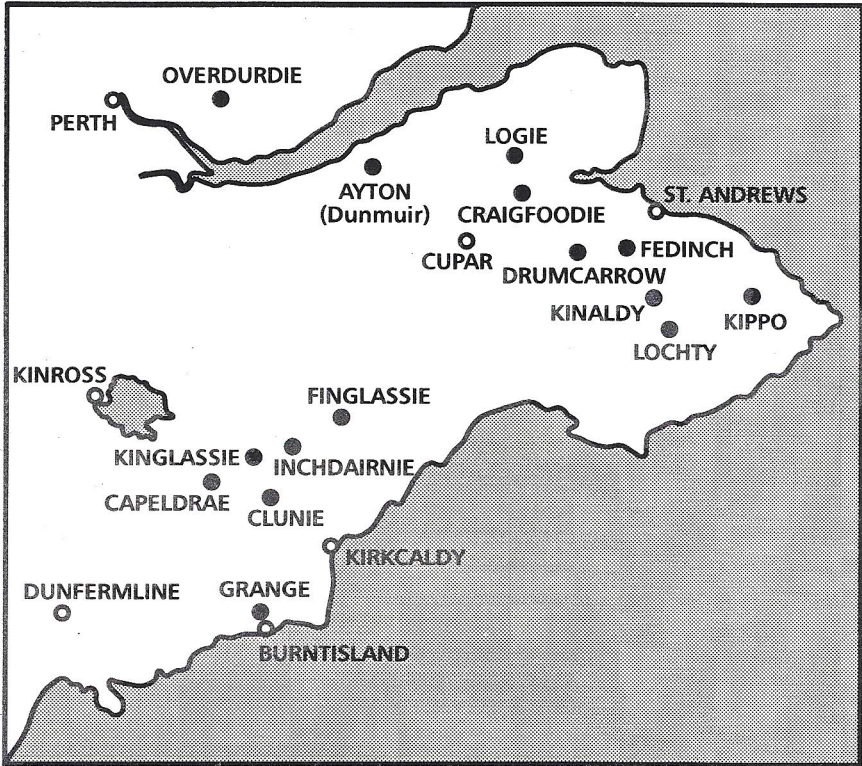
John Ayton of Kinaldy who was the third son of Andrew and Dunmuir married Margaret Stewart, illegitimate great grand-daughter of King James II of Scots. Minor branches stemming from Kinaldy included Ayton of Kippo, Ayton of Finglassie, and Ayton of Fedinch. John's grandson, Sir Robert, born in 1570, eminent writer and poet, travelled south with his king when he also became monarch of England. He was secretary to the queens of both James VI and Charles I, settled in London and is buried in Westminster Abbey. His nephew Sir John Ayton of Kippo was Usher of the Black Rod in the reign of Charles II. This dynasty lasted until the 18th century, when it also died out, and the Kinaldy estate passed to maternal relations, the Monypennies of Pitmillly.

Through the centuries the surname has had numerous variant spellings including Aeton, Aiton, Aitton, Aytone, Aytoun, Eaton, Eyton and various permutations of these. At the time of the Ragman Roll other Aytons were mentioned as coming from Haddington, Cambusneythan and Dumfries but it is not known whether they were connected, and there were individuals recorded in Fife before Andrew of Dunmuir went there. There are yet Aitons living in Lanarkshire and Ayrshire whose families have been there since at least the 16th century when John and James Ayton were mentioned as tenants at Heuchheid in Avondale. There are also Eatons living in Angus and Kincardineshire whose families have been recorded there from the early 17th century, where an



Alexander Aittine is mentioned at Brechin in 1611. The Eatons of Ulster are also of Scots origin. These Aitons and Eatons were not lairds, but mostly farmers and tradesmen, who may perhaps be offshoots of the original Berwickshire family having left the main stock before Andrew Ayton went to Fife. Collins "Scots Kith and Kin" lists the surnames Ayton and Eaton as septs of the Home family.

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*Place names used as territorial titles by members of the Ayton Family in Fife between c1500-1900; i.e. AYTOUN OF CAPELDRAE. This list is not complete, nor contains all lands held by them.*

There were also Ayton of Balcouthie, Aytoun of Byrhills, Aytoun of Balquhomerie and Ayton of Kincraigie. Some of those titles were only in use for three, two or even one generation.

**AYTON  
OF AYTON**

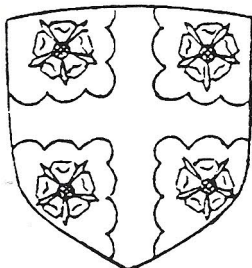
- A. of BALCOUTHIE
- A. of CRAIGFOODIE
- A. of CLUNIE
- A. of LOGIE

**AYTOUN  
OF INCHDAIRNIE**

- A. of KINGLASSIE
- A. of GRANGE
- A. of BYRHILLS
- A. of BALQUHOMERIE
- A. of CAPELDRAE

**AYTON  
OF KINALDY**

- A. of KIPPO
- A. of FEDINCH
- A. of FINGLASSIE
- A. of OVERDURDIE
- A. of DRUMCARROW
- A. of KINCRAIGIE
- A. of LOCHTY

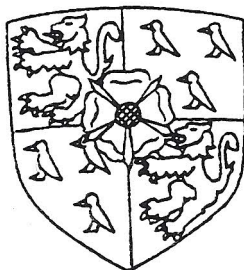


**1. AYTON  
OF AYTON**

## **AYTON OF AYTON**

*Argent, a cross engrailed between four roses Gules.*

*Note: Recorded as AITON OF THAT ILK in the Public Register of all Arms and Bearings in Scotland.*

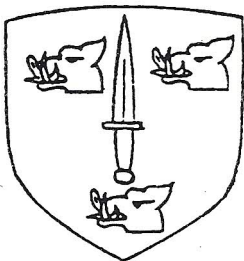


**2. HOME  
OF AYTON**

## **HOME OF AYTON**

*Quarterly: 1st and 4th Vert, a lion rampant argent, for Home, 2nd and 3rd Argent, three popinjays vert, beaked and membered Gules, for Pepdie; a rose Gules (Ayton) for difference.*

*Note: These arms are not recorded in the Public Register of all Arms & Bearings in Scotland but are known to have been used by this family before the introduction of the Register.*



**3. FORDYCE  
OF AYTON**

## **FORDYCE OF AYTON**

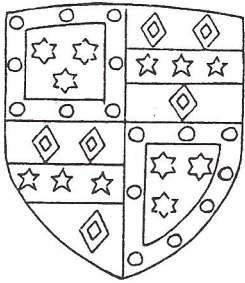
*Gules: a dagger in pale proper, point upwards, between three boars' heads couped Or.*

*Note: Recorded in the Public Register of all Arms and Bearings in Scotland in 1767.*

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## MITCHELL-INNES OF AYTON



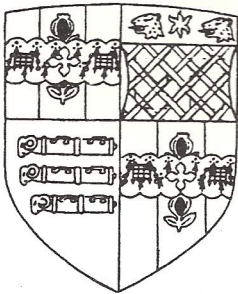
**1. MITCHELL-  
INNES OF  
PARSONS GREEN**

Quarterly: 1st and 4th Argent, three mullets of six points within a bordure Gules charged with eight besants, for Innes; 2nd and 3rd Sable, on a fess between three mascles Or three mullets Gules, for Mitchell.

Note: The above arms were recorded in 1840 in the Public Register of all Arms and Bearings in Scotland for **MITCHELL-INNES OF PARSONS GREEN**

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## LIDDELL-GRAINGER OF AYTON



**1. LIDDELL-  
GRAINGER  
OF AYTON**

Quarterly: 1st and 4th Azure, on a pale Or two pomegranates stalked, leaved and slipped proper, over all a fess invected Ermine, thereon a quatrefoil between two portcullises with chains Sable for Grainger; 2nd Argent fretty Gules, two voiders Or, on a chief of the second an estoile between leopards' heads erased of the third, for Liddell; 3rd Argent three battering rams barways in pale proper headed and garnished Azure, for Bertie.

Note: Recorded in the Public Register of all Arms and Bearings in Scotland on the 27th November 1950.

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***Heraldry of the various owners of the estates of Ayton in Berwickshire from the 12th century to the present day.***



# **Ayton Castle**

## **Berwickshire, Scotland**

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### **A BRIEF HISTORY**

Just off the A1 between Berwick and Edinburgh, nestling in beauty of the Scottish Borders, lies one of Scotland's most interesting family homes, Ayton Castle. The Castle is unique in that its interior is outstandingly opulent in character, yet maintains the warmth, charm and comfort of a family home.

The locality surrounding Ayton Castle is as colourful as the history of the Castle itself. There have been settlements in the area dating back to Neolithic times and some sixty identifiable agricultural traces remain on the estate.

The earliest documented inhabitants here were the Ayton family, who were first recorded in era 1166-82. Later when the estates were in the hands of a branch of the powerful Home family the formidable tower of Ayton was demolished in 1498 by the Earl of Surrey on the instructions of Henry VII. The fortified house was rebuilt.

The Borders have enjoyed a colourful history and were a battleground for the Scots and English for many years prior to James VI of Scotland ascending the English throne. After the suppression of the Jacobite rebellion, when the Homes supported the Stuarts against the Hanovarians, the Estates were sequestrated by the Crown as the penalty for disloyalty. They were bought by Thomas Fordyce, whose grandson sold them to William Mitchell-Innes in 1830. The original house burnt down in 1836 and Mitchell-Innes embarked upon the re-building of what is now Ayton Castle.

Determined to build a house worthy of his new landed status, Mitchell-Innes approached James Gillespie Graham, Scotland's leading Gothic-revival architect in the 19th century. Ayton Castle is the last major work undertaken by Gillespie and was completed in two years: an amazing achievement for an undertaking of this size.

Due to financial difficulties, Mitchell-Innes was forced to sell the Castle in 1888 to Henry Liddell, grandfather of the present owner, David Liddell-Grainger. Without making substantial alterations to the interior, Mr. Liddell-Grainger has embarked upon a restoration and redecoration of the Castle and it is now considered to be an outstanding example of Scottish Baronial style.

**Produced by the Ayton Family Society. Contact address:  
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