

Pre-history to the Roman invasion

From 6000 BC (i.e. Before Christ's birth)

There is evidence to prove that human activity was present within what is now known as The Eastern Borders and Northumberland. The people were nomadic, as they did not build permanent houses nor erect monuments to their dead, preferring to travel across the land gathering plants and vegetables and following the herds of deer which were a source of food. Animal skin would have been used for tents and clothing whilst tools would have been from bones, stone or flint. These ancient tools can still be found in rock shelters and caves as was shown at Fairnieside Farm, near Ayton, where, in 1876, a stone age cutting or cleaving instrument was found.

From around 3000 BC

People started to farm and to herd animals and they constructed permanent homes as well as religious and funeral monuments. Monuments from 3000BC are located in The Eastern Borders and Northumberland, and they include: ring marks, stone circles, burial cairns and hill forts.

From around 1000 BC

There were the first signs of a community in the area. Evidence of this was revealed again at Fairnieside Farm when in 1968, a farmer's plough opened up an adult grave which was estimated to be 3000 years old.

From around 750 BC onwards

The first Celts came to what is now Scotland, displacing ancestral settlers as the dominant group.



However, the Celts, as was typical around their homelands across Europe, were never one kingdom as separate families gathered together to form tribes or clans.

Scotland had at least 16 tribes with the tribesmen loyal to their own respective kings and queens. Those north of the Forth-Clyde isthmus were to become known as the Pictii by the Romans, or as we know call them, "Picts". Those in the south were regarded as Brythonic/Brethonic or, as they became known, the "Britons".

The tribe which ruled what is now The Eastern Borders, the Lothians and Northumberland were the Votadini (later known as Y Gododdin by the dark ages): their capital was located on a hill in East Lothian called Traprain Law (between Haddington and East Linton just off the A1). These tribesmen and women, as well as those living in most of the area to the south of the Forth-Clyde isthmus probably

spoke a language similar to the old Welsh/Brethonic tribes occupying what were later to become Wales and England.

To the north of Traprain Law was another Votadinian centre called Din Eidyn, later to become Dunedin – today we call it Edinburgh.

To the south it is possible that Ayton Hill with its panoramic views and fresh water supply was also used by the Votadini Celts as a base.

Roman invasion to the 11th Century

43AD

Claudius the Roman Emperor orders the invasion of what is now southern England.

However, while there may have been some military excursions into what is now Scotland, it is not until later that significant incursions into the South of Scotland are recorded.

80-84AD

Agricola, the Roman Imperial Governor of Southern England, attacked southern Scotland and advanced as far north as the River Tay.

Before the Romans could exploit their victory, a harsh winter came. Agricola was recalled to



Rome due to unrest in the city and the Roman legions withdrew south to secure territory to the south of a line that was later to be fortified and known as Hadrian's Wall.

Over the next 3 years his army strengthened their grip on what they called Caledonia culminating in the defeat of a massive army of three Celtic tribes unified under Calgacus at the Battle of Mons Graupius (thought to be near the hill called Bennachie, Huntly, Aberdeenshire).

Calgacus, translating as “the Swordsman”, was most likely a Pict and is the first ever resident (real or fictitious is not known) to be quoted anywhere, with

Tacitus recording his stirring words to his troops. However, it is not unknown for Romans to embellish their opponent's numbers and deeds to make the victory all the more noteworthy back in Rome.

119AD

Governor Pompeius Falco began work on Hadrian's Wall: the work took several years to finish and when completed the wall stretched over seventy miles from the Solway Firth in the west to Wallsend near Newcastle in the east.

140AD

Romans led by Governor Lollius Urbicus return to Scotland and commence building Antonines Wall, which spanned the narrow isthmus between the Rivers Forth and Clyde.

160AD

Roman troops abandon Antonines Wall following repeated fierce attacks by the Celtic tribes, whom the Romans gave the collective name 'pictii' because of their painted faces and bodies. Today this collective is known as the Picts.

313AD

Emperor Constantine the first makes Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire.



410AD

The Roman garrison finally leaves its province Britannia undefended.

420-500AD

The Scots of Dalriada start to settle in Argyll and the Lennox area around Loch Lomond and establish settlements in Kintyre, Lorn, Islay and Jura under their Chieftain Fergus Mor.

449AD

The Angles land in Northern England for the first time.

493AD

Romano-British leader Ambrosius Aurelianus (possibly later to be known as King Arthur according to the

History of Britons written in Latin by the chronicler Nennius) and his army defeat the Angles at Badon Hill.

685AD

The Battle of Dunnichen Moss, also known as Nechtansmere in the Sidlaw Hills near Forfar. Probably the most important date in the formation of Scotland because for the first time a confederation of Scots and Picts, led by the Pict, Bridei mac Bile, unite to inflict a momentous victory over the almost invincible Angles of Northumbria.

This victory coupled with the growing strength of the Vikings of York meant the Angles could no longer support the territory gained by repeated military campaigns and their land occupation began retracting to their home patch of Northumbria.

903-918AD

The Vikings, who had increasingly been viewing Scotland with predatory intentions, laid waste the Lothians and Borders. Rallying behind Columba's sacred banner, the Scots fought

back and beat the Vikings the next year. In 914 the Scots were defeated at Corbridge in Northumbria by the Viking Ragnall of York. However, Scotland's King Constantine II returned to Corbridge in 918, this time defeating Ragnall.

1018AD

The Battle of Carham, Northumbria was fought because the Angles of Northumbria wanted to reassert their grip on the Lothians and the Eastern Borders. King Malcolm II of Scotland defeated Edwulf and his Northumbrians.

Although the casualties are unknown, it is known that at least 18 Northumbrian clergy plus a fair score of Northumbrian nobility perished in the battle. The consequence of the battle was a border line was finally drawn between the Scots and the Northumbrians and that line on the east side of Britain was the natural barrier of the River Tweed.

1040-57AD

King Macbeth for the first time on Scottish soil utilises the talents of Norman warrior mercenaries in his various military campaigns.

1066AD

The Battle of Hastings The Anglo Saxons led by Harold were defeated by William the Conqueror of Normandy

1069AD

Cospatrick (or Gospatrick), the Earl of Northumberland, and several other Angle nobles connected with other northern counties supported the inauguration of a Viking king on the throne at York. William the Conqueror marched north and defeated this insurrection.

Cospatrick fled to Scotland carrying with him Edgar Atheling, the heir to the Anglo-Saxon line and his two sisters Margaret and Christina. Malcolm III (Canmore), King of Scotland, 1057-1093, married Margaret and bestowed on the expatriate noble the manor of Dunbar, the broad lands in the Merse (located in the Eastern Borders) and the Lothians.

A couple of generations and a marriage dowry of the lands of Hume (also located in the Eastern Borders) later, and the family adopted the name of the dowry lands and the family Hume appears. This name was to appear repeatedly in the annals of Ayton history over the next 800 years.

Early Medieval (12th/13th Centuries)

1097-1107

Edgar, King of Scotland issues a charter which proclaims the granting of the lands of Prendergust to Swain, priest of the ancient parish of Fishwick, who in turn renounced his title in favour of the Benedictine monks of Coldingham Priory. The lands of Prendergust included the village of Ayton just north of the castle, together with another small village known as Nether Ayton (Lower Ayton), which stood to the east of the present churchyard on the south side of the Eye Water and near to the Roman road, known as the Devils Causeway, which extended from Newcastle to St Abbs head. It is possible that a third small hamlet known as Hornford or Horford was included in the charter: this hamlet was located near the present Jubilee Bridge over the Eye Water south west of Ayton Village, where the Horn Burn joins the Eye Water. It should be noted that in the maps associated with Timothy Ponts studies of Scotland 1610 Ayton and Nether Ayton are detailed yet Hornford is not.

1166

A Norman Noble family by the name of De Vesci, came to the village of Ayton, and built a castle or defensive tower for the protection of the family and vassals. The De Vescis eventually changed their name to de Eitun and gained considerable power in the area (the Aytons of Inchdarney in Fife are supposed to be lineal descendants).

1190-1200

Helio signs a charter reaffirming the lands pertaining to Prendergust.

1249-1260

King Alexander III, during the early part of his reign introduced wealthy Flemings (Flemish) merchants to the south east of Scotland, including Berwick. They exported wool and imported silks from their market places known as Red Halls. During this period Berwick was developed into an emporium of commerce based on free trade.

1276

Henry, a knight, of Prendergust, subscribed to a charter regarding the lands of the area.

1286

King Alexander III, on the night of 18th March, falls to his death over the cliffs close to Queensferry. His only direct heir was his granddaughter, the Maid of Norway. She died on her way to Scotland whose regency council, as a consequence, appealed to Edward I of England to judge who should be Scotland's next King. The choice was between Robert Bruce and John Balliol. Balliol's claim in law was undoubtedly the stronger and Edward I chose him believing that with diplomacy Scotland was now added to his list of titles.

1290

The administrative district known as the Scottish East March, with its own warden, was formed. The Parish of Ayton was located in the Scottish East March. Today we know the Scottish East March as The Eastern Borders or East Berwickshire.

1296

King John Balliol reached the limit of his flexibility with Edward I and raided parts of northern England. Edward I was quick to retaliate and on 30th March overran Berwick-upon-Tweed in a day, brushing aside the towns defences with ease. (At this time Berwick was a major port and one of Scotland's largest towns with a wealthy and established merchant class grown rich on trade.) Edward I's army systematically sacked the town and up to 7 000 of its merchants and citizens were slaughtered. To prevent further death Sir William Douglas surrendered Berwick castle.

On the 23rd of April Edward despatched John de Warenne with a mounted contingent to secure Dunbar castle. Near the castle at Spottismuir, de Warenne was confronted by King John's army. The English commander did not fight on the defensive and pushed his men towards the Spott Burn.

The Scots, assuming the English were about to flee, charged. De Warenne army drove the Scots back killing hundreds of foot soldiers. Following their defeats at Berwick and Dunbar the Scottish resistance crumbled culminating in the humiliation of King John at Montrose where his coat of arms was torn from him. The sacred Stone of Destiny was pillaged from Scone Palace, along with the Black Rood of St. Margaret.

1298, July

The Battle of Falkirk. Prior to the battle Edward Longshanks' army of 2,500 horse and 12,000 foot moved up the great north road, with an English fleet in close support. Edward had difficulties feeding his men so they pillaged as they went.

Utilising the expertise of their archers, Edward's army went on to win the Battle of Falkirk defeating Scotland's guardian William Wallace and his army, which suffered considerable losses. The English army, still hungry after victory, retired south to England laying waste to the Scottish Borders as they went.

Later Medieval (14th/15th Centuries) and the Renaissance

1305

William Wallace, following his betrayal by some Scottish nobility, was captured and then executed by the English. He was hung, drawn and quartered, i.e. he was hanged by the neck until he was almost dead, cut down, his bones half pulled apart by horses, then he would have been disembowelled while still alive, probably beheaded and then his body was cut into four quarters with one of these being hung from the gates of Berwick's town walls, as a warning to the rebellious Scots.

1306

Robert Bruce, son of Robert detailed in the 1286 entry, becomes King of Scotland. Edward I, England's ageing king, sent his half cousin De Valence to subdue the new King and his supporters. Robert's wife was captured taken down the great north road to Berwick, where she was placed in a cage and suspended from the town's battlements.

1310

England's new King, Edward II, attempted to curtail King Robert Bruce's growing influence and lead an army into Scotland. Declining battle, Robert pursued a Fabian course of action until England's army withdrew. Robert's army marched down the great north road and moved into Northumberland looting and pillaging in a revenge raid.

1314

By this date King Robert Bruce had retaken all of Scotland, with the exception of Stirling Castle which was under siege. Edward II in an attempt to relieve the castle assembled an army of 17000 at Wark in Northumberland. This army moved up the great north road, the English fleet in close support. Scotland's army had prepared a battlefield with concealed pits and traps at the Bannock Burn. The Scottish foot soldiers were deployed in 4 divisions with Sir John Douglas's borderers in the 3rd division. In the 2-day battle, which followed, the English army was defeated with 4000 dead and Stirling Castle fell into Scottish hands. This victory became known as The Battle of Bannockburn.

King Robert slays Sir Edward de Bohun

1318

Berwick once more becomes Scottish as Bruce's army retakes the town.

1320

Declaration of Arbroath was signed by Scotland's aristocracy, including Patrick Dunbar, the Earl of March.

1326

At Lindisfarne Monastery on Holy Island records show that in 1326 William de Prendergust – being a border reiver – rendered himself notorious by plundering the brewhouse and bakehouse of that religious establishment. This was the only recorded time in 400 years of reiving that the monastery was plundered.

1333, 19th July

The Battle of Halidon Hill was fought because Scotland was attempting to lift the siege of Berwick-upon-Tweed. Sir Archibald Douglas the Scottish commander attacked England's King Edward III's army at Halidon Hill. The attack failed due to the accuracy of England's archers and Berwick surrendered. Scotland's losses were up to 10,000, while English losses were no more than a few hundred.

The rout which followed the battle continued for 5 corpse strewn miles as the English knights killed at will. Probably the first rear-guard defence was organised around Ayton using the River Eye as a natural defensive barrier. The English installed Edward Balliol as a puppet king and the legitimate heir (young King David) was sent to France for safety.

1336

Edward III again sent an army north in support of the puppet king Edward Balliol, who Scotland continued to resist, and laid waste as far as Lochindorb in Moray.

1338

Black Agnes Countess of the East March defied an English army for five months from the walls of Dunbar.

1346-57

King David, in response to King Philip of France plea, moved his Scottish army through the East March and descended on Northumberland pillaging as far as Hexham and Lanercost. Edward III's northern barons Neville and Percy organised a defence by deploying a 15,000 strong army close to Durham.

Although Sir William Douglas' borderers stumbled across this army and were put to flight, they managed to reorganise and Douglas commanded the right flank of the Scottish army at the Battle of Neville's Cross. The English archers caused havoc in the Scottish ranks, whilst the English cavalry outflanked the Scots. In the carnage which followed King David was captured and remained in the Tower of London for 11 years, until a ransom was agreed.

Scotland was not subdued by the defeat at Neville's Cross and, in a minor battle at Nesbit Hill near Ayton Parish, they defeated an English army and briefly retook Berwick.

Edward III retaliated to the defeat at Nesbit Hill with vigour and his army rampaged through the Scottish East March laying waste as far as Haddington and Edinburgh.

When King David was released in 1357, he signed the Treaty of Berwick with Edward III.

1349

The Black Death, also known as the English pestilence hit the parish of Ayton for the first time, causing the population to remain virtually constant for nearly 150 years. Due to their remoteness, the Scottish rural communities were less affected than England, where a third of the population was wiped out. The black death visited the area again in both the late fourteenth and late fifteenth centuries.

1388, 19th August

Battle of Otterburn (to add)

1402, June

Battle of Homildon Hill (now Humbleton, near Wooler): the new Earl of Douglas and Sir Alexander Hume join forces and raised an army of 10,000 which looted and pillaged as far as Newcastle. As they withdrew this army encountered Hotspur Percy, who, learning from Otterburn, deployed his Welsh mercenary longbow men with great effect.

Douglas showed no leadership as his lightly armoured border spearmen fell in the arrow storm. The Scottish lines broke, following the death of about 500 spearmen, and in the rout which followed as many as 500 drowned in their escape across the river. Both Douglas and Hume were captured and held to ransom.

It should be noted that once released the two shared life ups and downs and they both met their end in 1424 at the Battle of Verneuil where they were part of a Scottish mercenary army which fought with the French against an English army. This was the first serious attempt to tackle the famous English longbow men blow for blow as the Scottish army entered the fray with a large contingent of their own longbow men. In the battle which followed and to quote a chronicler of the time, the arrow fight was 'murderous' and 'horrible to watch' and although the English incurred large losses the Scottish army was almost annihilated.

1435

The Earl of Northumberland, England's East March Warden, at the head of 4,000 riders, attempted to raid the Scottish East and Middle Marches. Douglas, Warden of the Scottish Middle March, with his riders intercepted the Earls army at Piper Dene near Wark in the English East March and put them to flight.

1472

George Hume, son of Sir Alexander Hume of Dunglass, was granted the land around Ayton and so became the ancestral home of the Humes of Ayton.

1473

Sir Alexander Hume becomes Lord Hume.

1482

The Duke of Albany committed treason and conspired with Edward IV of England's forces and Berwick changed hands for the last time.

1487

Battle of Sauchieburn, near Glasgow: King James III had attempted to curb the financial powers of the Scottish nobles. In response to losing the revenues from Coldingham Priory, Lord Alexander Hume along with other disaffected nobles conspired against their sovereign. At the Battle of Sauchieburn these disaffected nobles defeated the Kings army. The King died in the battle, with Humes East March spearmen contributing to the defeat and death of James. Immediately after the battle Alexander Hume jnr becomes the second Lord Hume.

1497

Lord Hume, at James IV behest, invaded Northern England in support of the pretensions of Perkin Warbeck. Durham and Northumberland were ravaged; in retaliation the Earl of Surrey, the renowned General of Henry VII, laid waste to the estates of the Humes and to quote the chronicler Ford 'demolished old Ayton Castle, the strongest of their forts'. Although much damage occurred, the village survived, however, Ayton ceased to be a strategic stronghold of the Hume family. In relation to this event Scott notes down in Marmion:

*I have not ridden in Scotland since
James back'd the cause of that mock Prince
Warbeck, the Flemish counterfeit
Who on the gibbet paid the cheat
Then did I match with Surrey's power
What time we razed old Ayton Tower*

In September of this year, and probably to alleviate Lord Hume's problems, James IV and Henry VII met at Ayton and agreed the terms of a seven-year truce. This truce was probably agreed at Ayton church as by this time the castle had been destroyed.

1506

Alexander Hume III, son of the second Lord Hume becomes the third Lord Hume and also the Warden of the East March.

1513, 22 August

The third Lord Hume, at James IV request took 5,000 East March riders into England's East March pillaging and burning as they went. Whilst returning to Scotland, laden down with booty, the rear guard was attacked by Sir William Bulmer's force near Wooler. Estimates on Scotland's casualties range from 200 to 600 and 200 were taken prisoner, including Sir George Hume brother of Lord Hume.

1513, 7 September

The Battle of Flodden. A certain mystique revolves around Flodden, as well as a couple of unanswered questions. Like (look at the entry for 1497 above): if England had won the battle so decisively, why did the same not happen again? Henry VIII, who was more aggressive and bombastic than his father, was now on the throne and the Earl of Surrey was still in charge of the army. Why is it that the tradition of the riding of the bounds in Hawick, Selkirk, etc, stems from turning back the English army after Flodden? It has been suggested that while England's losses were numerically not as bad as Scotland, a large proportion of their best fighting men were either dead or injured. Scotland lost a King, much of its aristocracy and possibly 10,000 men, yet the English military position was so weakened due to their losses that they were not strong enough to pillage the Scottish marches.

The irony of the battle is that it did not need to be fought in the first place as James IV was married to Henry VII's daughter and yet he still went to war in defence of a French quarrel with England. In addition, James IV was interested in science, particularly artillery, and had developed some of the most advanced artillery pieces in Europe at Edinburgh Castle. So the scene is set. Scotland, for once a better equipped army than the enemy, are on the high ground at Flodden. Step forward the chivalrous idiosyncratic James IV and as they say the rest is history.

It should also be noted that controversy still surrounds the role that Lord Hume and his East and Middle March men played in the battle. Lord Hume's men operated under the leadership of Lord Huntly and formed the left flank vanguard for the Scottish army.

James ordered them to advance and they charged forward into England's right wing, comprising mainly levies (conscripts), who were being marshalled by Sir Edward Howard and began to rout them.

James IV seeing this success committed a masterpiece of reckless folly by placing himself at the head of the centre division, leaving his army without a commander, and charging towards the English centre and to his death. Now here is the controversy: post battle allegations alleged that following the rout of Howard, Lord Hume's men took no further part in the battle and in so doing neglected their duty by failing to assist the King. Yet this allegation runs

contrary to a letter written by Lord Dacre, the commander of the English reserve who, upon seeing Howards predicament, advanced forward to give him support. The letter then details the Humes who fell in the battle fighting his reserves along with details of the own men captured by the Scots.

Interesting characters also took part in the battle.

On the English side was the bastard Heron, an outlaw, who aided Howard when his levies were being routed. On the Scottish side were the seven spears of Wedderburn. These 'spears' were seven Hume brothers from Wedderburn in the East March who fought alongside their father. It should be noted that the father and the eldest brother died in the battle.

Religious Reformation to the Act of Union

1515

John Knox the Scottish protestant reformer was born in this year near Haddington.

1516

Queen Margaret, the late James IV wife acted as regent until her marriage to the Earl of Angus. Albany succeeded Margaret as regent following her marriage and she fled to England in fear of her life, aided by Lord Hume, who, in turn, concocted with Lord Dacre, measures to overthrow Albany's regency. In retaliation Albany's army marched in the East March, overran Hume's Estates, captured Hume Castle and razed Fast Castle. Hume made his peace with Albany but still contrived with Lord Dacre to turn the Scottish and English East Marches into places of 'constant robberies, fire-raising and murders'. For these crimes Hume was eventually executed.

1542

Battle of Haddon-rigg. Cross border 'reiver' raids were common during this period with innumerable minor raids being supplemented by the odd big raid. This was a big raid organised by England's East March warden, Sir Robert Bowes, who was intent on pillaging the Scottish East and Middle Marches. The Earl of Huntly organised a fierce and protracted defence at Haddon-rigg, east of Kelso, and with the timely arrival of 400 hundred East March lancers led by Lord Hume, they succeeded in capturing six hundred of the enemy, including Bowes, with seventy English dead.

1542

Lord Hume, and the Earl of Huntly and Seton harass a formidable English army led by the Duke of Norfolk in the East March. The harassing was so successful that the army retired to Berwick within a week and was disbanded.

1545 Battle of Ancrum Moor.

Scotland was again left without a king following the early death of James V. England, pushing her territorial ambitions, proposed a marriage alliance and was rebuffed, and so resorted to an aggressive policy known as the 'rough wooing', which took the form of a campaign of terror of Scotland's East and Middle Marches by Sir Ralph Eure the English Middle March warden. The Earl of Angus organised Scotland's response by defeating Eure at Ancrum Moor, inflicting 600 deaths and taking 1000 prisoners.

1547, 10th September

Battle of Pinkie. The last decade had seen an escalation of cross border raids. England's Lord Protector the Duke of Somerset lost patience with what he saw as Scotland's intransigence and raised an army, which mustered at Newcastle. They moved north and passed through Ayton Parish on the 4th of September. On the 9th, Lord Hume's borderers moved forward to harry the English army only to be caught by surprise and in the chase which followed Hume fell from his horse and eventually died from his wounds.

The next day Scotland's army, led by Regent Arran, were out gunned and out manoeuvred by Somerset and in the battle lost up to 10000 men to England's 250. Hume's wife defended Hume Castle against Somerset, but ultimately surrendered and the castle was then garrisoned by English troops.

Mid-16th Century

Bastleridge, now a farm to located in the south of Ayton Parish, belonged to the Humes and there is a deed in which the Homes of Bastleridge is styled as Bailiff of the Barony of Peelwalls.

1560

The fifth Lord Hume supports the reformation and sat in the parliament which abolished Popery and established the Protestant Church.

1568

Battle of Langside – Lord Hume and six hundred East March spearmen, join an array of nobles who joined forces in defence of the infant king (King James VI) and defeated Queen Mary (Queen of Scots) and Lord Bothwell's army west of Glasgow.

1603

The Union of the Crowns

James VI of Scotland becomes James I of England. He travelled down the Great North Road through Ayton Parish to London in order to accept the crown of England.

1607

The Border Reiver problem in both England and Scotland is tackled by James VI/I. Hundred are hanged, many families are sent abroad and the towns/villages destroyed, never to be rebuilt. The governmental organisation, known as the Marches, of the borders are dismantled and the East March – the smallest of the marches – becomes Berwickshire under the new set-up.

1617

James VI/I made his only return to Scotland. He travelled once more through Ayton Parish on his road north to Edinburgh. The royal requirements for assistance almost bankrupted Berwickshire as he demanded 336 horses, fodder and men to assist his entourage of 5000 courtiers. To the relief of the people of Berwickshire James decided to return to London via Carlisle.

1624

The first documented evidence that the parish of Ayton had a (Latin) school. The master is believed to be a Mr Leonard Houston, who left Ayton to become minister of Ellem.

Mid 1630's

The political power of the Humes of Hume comes to an end. For the next 150 years and through several generations, this branch of the Hume family showed extreme political ineptitude. They were Roman Catholic when they should have been Protestant, Episcopalian when they should have been Presbyterian, Nationalists when they should have been Unionist and Jacobites when they should have been Hanovarian.

NOTE... (by Keith Miller)

"I have included historical fact on this website if I believed from the evidence that Ayton Parish was directly affected by events or the citizens of the parish were involved in the events and that is why, for example, the Battle of Falkirk is detailed yet the Battle of Stirling Bridge is not. Falkirk is detailed because the English army marched through the parish looting and pillaging as they went on its way to Falkirk. Stirling Bridge is not detailed because the English army which fought there was raised from the army of occupation (and I have yet to find evidence that citizens of the parish fought at Stirling Bridge)

However, the period 1638 until 1716 creates a problem. I have shown that I prefer to be a brief as possible yet Ayton was directly affected by the Battle of Sherriffmuir in so much as a branch of the Hume family lost the Ayton Castle estates because they supported the Stewart claim to the throne. So, I've been forced to provide a little more detail in explaining the most screwed up period in Scotland's history as, previously, the plot was simple: with the exception of reiver feuds, Scotland battled with England. During this period several sub-plots were thrown in including: Presbyterian Protestantism and Catholicism; Stewart, Orange and Hanoverian claims to the throne; the English civil war; Covenanters fighting first alongside Cromwell and then against him; and the house of Stewart wobbling between Protestantism and Catholicism. Confused? Then read on for enlightenment...

1638

The National Covenant was signed by the populous who are outraged by the introduction of the Book of Canons by King Charles I, which was considered more popish than the English Prayer Book. In Scotland covenant resistance was organised by the protestant Presbyterian Committee of the Estates. To join the covenanter army an oath proclaiming discipline and strict morality had to be sworn.

1644

Simple hand mills known as querns were left behind at the farm of Chesterbank in Ayton Parish by the covenanter army of Alexander Leslie, Earl of Leven, on their way south during a route march to the Battle of Marston Moor in 1644. Alexander Leslie's covenanter army fought alongside the English Parliament/Cromwell's new model army and defeated Charles I army commanded by his cousin, Prince Rupert.

1645

Battle of Kilsyth.

The Marquess of Montrose, a supporter of King Charles I, raised a Highland army in support of the King. Montrose flush from his recent victories against the Scottish covenanters at the Battles of Tippermuir, Aberdeen, Fyvie, Inverlochy, Auldearn and Alford was confronted by Baillies covenanter army at Kilsyth.

The covenanters army had been joined by Colonel Robert Home's Borderers who had recently returned from their successes in the Irish wars. However, a large contingent of the army was inexperienced levies. The covenanters' battle plan fell apart virtually straight away,

with Montrose's army outmanoeuvring and out fighting them. The covenanter army retreated to the safety of Stirling.

Montrose, bolstered by his success at Kilsyth, marched south hoping (in vain) for lowland recruits for his army, although the Marquis of Douglas at Galashiels volunteered 1000 men. David Leslie's (the Earl of Levens son), now the commander of the veteran covenanter army, returned north to confront Montrose. On the 13th of September Leslie's army defeated Montrose at the Battle of Philiphaugh near Selkirk. In the post battle slaughter, Leslie allowed the Protestant ministers to let the Lord's work be seen to be done and the prisoners were shot. The entourage of women and children associated with Montrose's army were drowned in the Ettrick Water.

1646

King Charles I surrendered to the Scottish covenanter army at Newark.

1647

The Committee of the Estates sent 3 commissioners to meet the incarcerated Charles I on the Isle of White. A compromise or 'engagement' was reached whereby, with Covenanter army support, Charles would push Presbyterianism down English throats – this gave rise to the pro-Royalist engagers led by Hamilton.

1648

Hamilton's engagers persuaded the Committee of the Estates with his royalist view. They raised a 20 000 army, including a regiment of Berwickshire men led by the Earl of Hume, which marched into England in an attempt to reinstate Charles I on the throne. Hamilton's engagers army was drawn into south Lancashire by the retreating enemy. Cromwell's new model army counter attacked at Ribblesdale Moor. The engagers army was totally routed incurring 500 dead, with Hamilton being captured at Uttoxeter...his ultimate fate was to be sent to the block.

1649

Charles I was executed in the scaffold at Whitehall. The committee of estates promptly hailed the exiled heir as Charles II.

1650

Battle of Dunbar. Charles II landed in Scotland in the June of this year and rode into Edinburgh where he forged an alliance with the committee of the estates. In July Cromwell moved his 16,000 strong army, supported by a fleet of the coast, through Ayton Parish up the great north road. The estates favoured a resort to arms and a covenanter army was formed, led by David Leslie. However, this army was plagued by religious councillors who recruited on religious grounds rather than military qualifications.

As a result, the Earl of Hume and his Berwickshire regiment did not participate in the battle. The opening stages of the campaign went well for Leslie with Cromwell's army retreating to Dunbar. Leslie moved his army to a strong position on Doon Hill close to Dunbar. His religious councillors urged attack to drive Cromwell from Canaan by the swords of the righteous. Leslie moved his men to lower ground with the view to attack the next day. Cromwell noted a strategic error in Leslie's positioning and attacked at dawn. Leslie's covenanters were hemmed in and in the battle which followed 3 000 lost their lives and 10 000 surrendered. The Earl of Hume could not have been much of a diplomat either because after the battle, Cromwell sent Colonel Fenwick to Hume Castle, which he captured

following a brief siege. Charles II moved into England and raised an army which was also defeated by Cromwell at Worcester; Charles fled the scene and went into exile.

1651

The Committee of the Estates was captured en-masse at Stirling by Monck, one of Cromwell's generals.

1660

Charles II becomes King of both Scotland and England following the death of Oliver Cromwell.

1661-1666

The Committee of the Estates was reintroduced. Various pieces of legislation were introduced over this period, including the recognition of the ecclesiastical establishment – the Episcopal system – an anathema to the covenanters, who considered it the back road to popery as it was not a creature of the Covenant signed in 1638. Presbyterian rebellion grew and in 1666 an attempt was made to take Edinburgh with the king's troops defeating the covenanters in the Pentland Hills.

1677

Jean the only daughter of the late Laird of Ayton, who was under age (age being 14 and she was 12), was summoned to appear in front of the Privy Council in Edinburgh, with the view to witnessing her chose the curators of her inheritance lands around Ayton. Prior to this appearance she was carried across the border by several members of the Hume family where she was married to a boy called George Hume. Upon their return to Scotland, and for breaking the law, the couple were fined and imprisoned for 3 months and all other Humes involved in the affair were fined.

1678

Battle of Drumclog: although defeated and repressed by the establishment, covenanter rebellion simmered until early June of this year when a motley army numbering 1500 and led by a firebrand named William Clelland, confronted the Government troopers of John Graham of Claverhouse – also known as Bonnie Dundee. In the short battle which ensued Clelland's Presbyterian covenanters routed Bonnie Dundee's men from the field of battle. Dundee and his men retreated to Glasgow where he was joined by a squadron of borderers led by Home and a defence of the city was made.

Later in June the Scottish Government raised more troops to join Bonnie Dundee and Home's borderers. Charles II sent his favourite bastard, James, Duke of Monmouth, to lead this army which confronted the covenanters at Bothwell Brig. The poorly armed covenanters discovered that prayer was no protection against cannonade round shot which collapsed whole lines of men. A bloody route quickly followed and in the end 800 covenanters lay dead with 1000 taken prisoner.

1685

Charles II died and his brother James VII of Scotland and II of England took the throne. He was even more openly catholic than his brother and at his coronation he deliberately omitted to undertake the preservation of the English Anglican church. In Holland, William of Orange was conspiring to overthrow his father-in-law James VII/II. He sent a carefully worded message to the Scottish Presbyterians supporting their cause. This support caused an uprising of resentment against James. The rebellion spread to England and in March 1689 William

landed and sent James into embittered exile. A convention followed to support William as the new King: only one person refused to recognise him and that was Bonnie Dundee, whose loyalty to the House of Stewart remained unshakeable.

1689

Battle of Killiecrankie – Following the death of Bonnie Dundee at this battle the House of Stewart lost their last foothold in Scotland. David Leslie and Hume led a regiment of Border men to fight for the protestant cause of William of Orange against Dundee. It is considered that this body of men formed the regiment which years later became known as The Kings Own Scottish Borders

1690

Battle of the Boyne- Following his defeat by William of Orange, James VII/II of the House of Stewart lost his last foothold in the British Isles. Sir Patrick Hume, a staunch supporter of William, participated in the Irish campaign which led to this battle and was rewarded with the title of the Earl of Marchmont for his endeavours.

1707

Union of the Parliaments of Scotland and England. Sir Patrick Hume, Earl of Marchmont, along with Sit Andrew Hume voted for the union while Sir Patrick Hume of Renton and George Hume voted against the union. It should also be noted that Sir Patrick Hume, Earl of Marchmont was paid £1104 17 shillings and 7 pence by the English parliament for his yes to the union vote. Many of Scotland nobility were paid to vote for the union, however the Earl of Marchmont was paid the most. The population rioted in the streets of Edinburgh and other towns, in anger at the decision.

So ended Scotland as an independent nation state, largely for selfish, financial reasons, giving rise to Robert Burns later reference to Scotland's nobility as a "parcel of rogues in a nation".