



Prestoungrange Arts Festival Society
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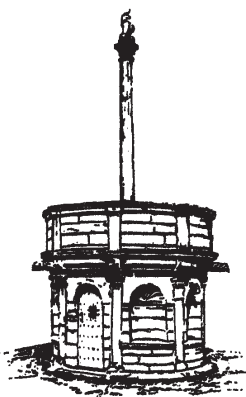
It's our heritage, let's celebrate together

We're on the Web!
See us at:
www.prestoungrange.org

Children's Christmas Colouring Competition



In anticipation of Michael McVeigh's new painting, based on the history of the Mercat Cross, the competition for this edition is for the youngsters. Send us your imaginatively coloured Prestonpans Mercat Cross by 30 January, 2003 and you could win a fantastic artist's set.



Souvenirs

Ties - Beautifully handcrafted by local artist, Coreen Chipulina. £35.00 each, incl. P&P.



Davy Steele - Summerlee CD. 10 tracks capture the essence and stirring quality of this talented local folk singer. £12.00 each, incl. P&P.



The Prestoungrange Murals Trail Map will guide you along the coastal route to ponder thirteen of Prestonpans artworks, old and new.



Michael McVeigh's Morison's Haven Prints £25.00 each, incl. P&P.

Kate Hunter's Prestonpans Saltworks Prints £25.00 each, incl. P&P.



All items available direct from Prestoungrange Arts Festival Society. Visit our website for updated information, our Virtual Pottery Exhibition and Prestoungrange Resource Packs.

Competition WINNERS

Beam Engine
The lucky winner of last edition's competition was Mr P Loftus, Prestonpans, who receives a complete set of the *Prestoungrange History Series*. Mr Loftus correctly guessed the weight of the beam as 30 tons.

Prestonpans Pottery Heritage
The response to the Prestoungrange Pottery Competition 2002 was particularly enthusiastic and the entries spectacular. The winning entry was the Dancing Fishwife by Helen Kemp of Kelso. All entries can be viewed on our website, and the winner at Cockenzie Centre where you can also place your order.



www.prestoungrange.org

brushstrokes

Special Interest Articles:

Mary Murray's Institution for Girls

School Master or Sorcerer?

Michael McVeigh's Morison's Haven

New Murals



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Welcome



With news of the Potters' Mural created by pupils and staff at Preston Lodge School and a colouring competition for children, as well as articles on the Mary Murray Institute and Dr. John Fian - Prestonpans' most infamous schoolteacher - this third edition of *Brushstrokes* definitely has its focus on youth. But it is not just aimed at young people: if you have memories of Prestonpans, then we want to hear from you. Take a look inside to find out why we hope you'll get in touch with the team.

Annemarie Allan

Annemarie Allan, Editor
Prestoungrange History Series

MY STORY...HER STORY... HIS STORY...OUR STORY HISTORY... IT'S ALL YOUR STORY

Work

What are your memories of the days when Prestonpans was busy brewing, mining, gardening, farming, making soap and bricks and salt?

Family

Were you born in Prestonpans? What about your parents, or your grandparents?

Leisure

Did you swim in the warm water at Morison's Haven, or maybe you played in a band, or helped to organise the Gala days?

Politics

How did local and national politics affect your life?

Religion

Were you part of the congregation at Preston and the Grange churches? Maybe you were married at Drummore Monastery?

If you have memories of Prestonpans, then the Baron Court of Prestoungrange would love to hear from you - and you won't even have to write it down. If you would rather, then we will write it with you.

TALK TO US ON:
01875 819 922

OR WRITE TO:
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MAIL ORDER YOUR PRESTOUNGRANGE HISTORY SERIES CHOOSE FROM

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- 5 HORSES, STEAM & ELECTRIC ENGINES AT PRESTOUNGRANGE
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- 8 WATER AT PRESTOUNGRANGE & PUMPING IT OUT
- 9 DECORATIVE POTTERY AT PRESTOUNGRANGE
- 10 GEOLOGY OF PRESTOUNGRANGE
- 11 AGRICULTURAL IMPROVEMENT AT DOLPHINSTOWN.
- 12 FAMOUS SINCE THE '45 - JOHN FOWLER & CO
- 13 THE GOTHENBURG



NEW publications available 2003:

- HISTORY OF THE GLENKINCHIE DISTILLERY
- PRESTOUNGRANGE STEAM SOCIETY
- THE BATTLE OF PRESTONPANS

ORDER FORM

Kate Hunter's Saltworks _____ at £25 each
Michael McVeigh's Morison's Haven _____ at £25 each
Prestoungrange History Series Booklet Nos _____ at £5.00 each
Second and further booklets _____ at £4.00 each
Set of all 13 Volumes _____ at £48.00
Safe Haven _____ at £3.00 each
Tales of the Pans _____ at £5.00 each

Name: _____ Address: _____
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Complete the quantities required before sending this order form to us together with your cheque made payable simply to 'Prestoungrange' to:-
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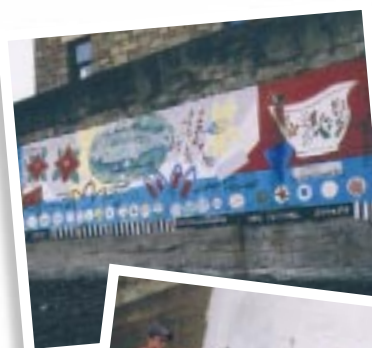
Potters Mural

by Preston Lodge High School students and Andrew Crummy Muralist

The Potters Mural was completed in the last week of term in June 2002. Under the guidance of muralist Andrew Crummy and several teachers, students from Preston Lodge High School produced a 70 foot mural in just under four days.

The theme of the mural is the pottery industry of Prestonpans. All the students had to design a plate based on this rich theme, then, in teams of four or five under the guidance of a teacher, produce a copy of a 'classic' piece of pottery from Prestonpans.

At first, the students and teachers did not believe they could produce a quality mural that would have such an impact. But by the end of the week, the students had enjoyed themselves immensely and are now eager to do more. Since its completion, the mural has attracted regular attention, including the local press and, through the internet, has been appreciated from as far afield as Australia.



Painting the Potters Mural

Michael McVeigh's Morison's Haven

This year's Prestoungrange Arts Festival Society Christmas cards, entitled *Morison's Haven* contrasts life above and below ground.

Michael hails from Dundee, one of five children. One of his earliest jobs was volunteering at the Zoo and he spent his summer holidays and weekends getting close to the wildlife, particularly the Giraffes, a personal favourite.

Many of Michael's paintings feature the sea simply because, as he sees it, Scotland is essentially an island. Almost wherever you are on Scotland's east coast you can see, hear or smell the sea. Michael first came to Edinburgh when his sister took him on a trip to the National Gallery. He was spellbound by the collection, particularly Rembrandt, and decided to move to Edinburgh to paint and be closer to the gallery.



Mary Murray's Institution for Girls

by James Forster Chair, Prestonpans Local History Society

The site on which the Prestonpans Community Centre now stands was once occupied by a very handsome building, known locally as 'Mary Murray's Institution for Girls'.

Miss Mary Murray was a wealthy lady who was a native of Dysart (Fife), where she died in 1861, but it was not until 1882 that her Will came into operation. It was discovered that her bequest, which amounted to £36,000, was to be used to train female children of poor families as domestic servants.

The Trustees had to search for a suitable place to put this into operation: eventually, they looked at a commodious building in the village of Preston, which had been used as a training centre for boys, and considered it most suitable. In late 1882, they named it Mary Murray's Institution for Girls.

Miss Isabella Meikle, formerly of Donaldson's Hospital, was appointed matron and all staff employed had to be female. The first intake of girls was 18 in number, aged between six and eight. They would remain there until the age of 14.

The children were to be instructed in reading, writing and arithmetic, sewing, spinning and knitting and, above all, in the principles of religion, honesty and truth. Those who remained in their first place of employment until the age of 20 and conducted themselves properly were to receive a present of £10 and, at the age of 60, if they had nowhere to live, should be taken back into the home and remain as long as they pleased.

After Mary Murray's closed, it became more or less a Community Centre for Prestonpans: it was used by Preston Lodge High School after the fire which destroyed the school in 1967.

It was also used as a nursery and a blood donor centre; also by the scouts, the weightlifting club, Preston Lodge FP Rugby Club and many other organisations.

Mary Murray's building was erected in 1832, at the cost of £3,000 from the funds of Dr. James Schaw's Trust. The present Community Centre was opened in 1980.



John Cunningham: schoolmaster or sorcerer?

by Annemarie Allan

How did an obscure schoolmaster from 17th Century Salt pans gain a world-wide reputation as the foremost witch of his day? The answer lies in the combination of a credulous king raised in an atmosphere of fear and suspicion and the thirst for a good story which typifies the popular press even today.

John Cunningham, otherwise known as Dr. John Fian, was accused of witchcraft by Geilles Duncan and Agnes Sampson, the latter also known as the 'Great Witch'. Their evidence, extracted under torture, included details of a plot against the person of King James I and VI. In the course of interrogations, these two women and subsequently Fian himself - also under torture - confessed to a catalogue of crimes involving the black arts. These included a plot to raise a storm at sea to sink the king's ship. The witches assembled on the Prestonpans shore, 'att the Newheavin callit Aitchesounes-heavin, betuix Musselburcht and Prestonpannis.' [1] They brought with them a baptised cat, which they threw into the waves while chanting spells, before taking to the water in a variety of leaky vessels, including a sieve. Later, they joined other witches at the old kirk at North Berwick for a celebration presided over by the devil, their master, with John Fian acting as his clerk. As far as the king was concerned, this devil was none other than his cousin - Francis, 5th Earl of Bothwell.

To the modern mind, these confessions seem ludicrous. Their impact, however, was catastrophic, triggering an unprecedented wave of 'witch fever' which spread from East Lothian into the rest of Scotland, through the British Isles and beyond. Between 1580 and 1680, Scotland saw the arrest, torture and execution of approximately 3,400 persons on suspicion of witchcraft, plus an additional 1,000 Roman

Catholics executed as 'heretic witches' [2]. In 1590 alone, 39 persons were executed in Prestonpans for witchcraft out of a loosely estimated population of 1,000. The list of names makes interesting reading, since many of these family names still survive in one manner or another: Aitcheson, Cowan, Gillan, Schaw, Wallace, Whitelaw. [3]

There is no doubt that Prestonpans had strong associations with witchcraft during the late 16th century. The painted ceiling at Prestongrange House, uncovered in 1962, depicts many figures associated with paganism and the occult. It is dated 1581, when the Barony of Prestongrange was held by Mark Ker the elder. The Ker family were reputed to be heavily involved in witchcraft; indeed, it was commonly believed that Mark Ker's death was the result of spellcraft by his wife [4]. But there is no evidence to link John Cunningham with the Ker family and Mark Ker's occult interests seemed to have been ignored by the king's officers. Unlike John Cunningham and Francis Boswell, Mark Ker was a favourite of the king.

As for John Cunningham himself, he might well have been no more than a footnote in some historical archive were it not for the publication in 1592 of: 'Newes from Scotland, declaring the damnable life of Doctor Fian a notable Sorcerer, who was burned at Edenbrough in Januarie last 1591' [5]

Witchcraft was the 16th century equivalent of UFO sightings, or crop circles. The pamphlet was guaranteed a wide readership and its sensationalist tone also guaranteed that John Cunningham, humble schoolmaster and clerk from Salt pans, would achieve fame as one of Britain's most notorious witches. Given the circumstances of his arrest and torture, he would have undoubtedly preferred obscurity.

'Who says today's teachers have a hard time.'



These confessions seem ludicrous. Their impact, however, was catastrophic...

References:

1. MA Murray, *The Witch Cult in Western Europe: a study in anthropology*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1921, p. 28
2. R Pugh, *The Deil's Ain*, Harlaw Heritage, Balerno, 2001
3. Ibid
4. Murray, Apted and Hodkinson, *Prestongrange and its Painted Ceiling*, in *Transactions of the East Lothian Antiquarian and Field Naturalist's Society*, Vol X, 1966
5. *Newes from Scotland, Declaring the damnable life of Doctor Fian*, 1592, William Wright, London

Saltworks

Kate Hunter's *Prestonpans Saltworks* mural depicts the history of the Saltworks in Prestonpans and features some familiar names and faces as well as visualizing the saltmaking process and some of its by products. The mural was specifically designed to adorn the western boundary wall of the Coffee House in the High Street. Until its installation, the 'portable' mural can be viewed at our studio in Cockenzie Centre or purchased, in the form of signed prints. Alternatively, anyone with a wall large enough can borrow the mural!

