



PRESTOUNGRANGE

Arts, history, entertainment, functions... and great food

Summing up the Prestoungrange phenomenon in Prestonpans is no easy task. It all started eight years ago, revolves mainly around Prestonpans, with a diverse cast of artists, historians, witches, brewers, two feudal Barons and an awful lot of enthusiasm.

When he gained access to the Baronial lands and titles of Prestoungrange and of Dolphinstoun in 1997, Dr Gordon Prestoungrange pondered what might be a suitable way of getting involved with the local community in and around the ancient feudal lands.

He was captivated by the rich history of the area and decided to use his lifetime of publishing experience to help document

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and share it. The Prestoungrange Arts Festival Society was born as the umbrella for this, and myriad other cultural initiatives.

A completely new dimension to the notion of 'sharing' such history was added by a chance visit to a Canadian town called Chemainus. There he found a thriving township which had just a decade before

been in dire economic straights. Like Prestonpans, it had lost its major industry and source of employment – a saw mill. Now it was bustling with tourists, colour and life, thanks to the spectacular murals which adorned the buildings and other arts activities going on in the town. The success of Chemainus had already inspired many other towns across the world to use history and the arts to help them recover from adverse times – and spawned the Global Association of Cultural Arts and Tourism. Prestonpans became the first European member and a sustained murals programme was launched.

The arts are clearly flourishing in Prestonpans and local people, some

sceptical at first, now take a real pride in their growing cultural reputation. Already the town is world-famous for its witchcraft heritage, thanks to a Baron Courts' pardons granted in July 2004.

Sustainability is the buzz-word for any initiative like this, and rightly so. Funded at first largely by the Baron Courts' charity,

there was a need to look at how the arts were to be financed long-term. And in 2000 an intriguing possibility started to take shape.

A run-down old pub called the Gothenburg had come on the market in Prestonpans. It had been closed for many years and needed extensive refurbishment, but it had a fascinating history. Its profits had once financed good works in the local mining community. It also had some exquisite examples of the famous arts and crafts movement still intact.

The Gothenburg was acquired, lovingly extended and renovated, and is now set to provide a steady stream of funding for the Prestoungrange Arts Festival. Into the bargain it is providing Prestonpans with a great venue for functions and entertainment, with good food and real ales to savour.

Read on to find out more about Prestonpans' murals and the Prestoungrange Gothenburg's history and modern charms.

Pauline Jaffray

Pauline Jaffray, Editor *East Lothian Life*

THE FLOURISHING CULTURE OF PRESTOUNGRANGE

History and culture underpin all the activities of the Prestoungrange Arts Festival which is the practical arm of the registered charity, the Baron Courts of Prestoungrange and Dolphinstoun.

As soon as it was founded in 1998, the Arts Festival began to commission local authors to document aspects of the area's history in the form of 10,000 word booklets. This has grown into a series which now includes 20 books, covering subjects such as the local salt and brick making industries; the history of the harbour at Morison's Haven; the Battle of Prestonpans; Fowler's Brewery and pottery of the area.

All the titles are available from the Prestoungrange Gothenburg or can be downloaded from the University Press section of the Baron Courts website at www.prestoungrange.org.

Murals and more

Next came the first of many murals to be found painted on walls in and around Prestonpans. Each mural depicts an aspect of the area's history, deliberately mirroring the subject matter of one of the booklets.

The artists commissioned to paint the murals are mainly local to the area and many are of international standing. Most murals are located along Prestonpans' High Street, with several on the sea wall opposite the Prestoungrange Gothenburg. There are also two 'gateway murals' each end of the town – one at the Prestoungrange Industrial Museum and the other at the Cockenzie Power Station – and several within the Gothenburg itself.

The fact that the murals show aspects of the town's own history and include portraits of real local people, past and the present, gives the local community a great sense of ownership of the works and vandalism is virtually unknown.

Initial doubts and some scepticism among locals soon evaporated and the work of the Arts Festival continues to grow organically. Each new initiative is evolving through the involvement of more local people who come along with new ideas and bags of enthusiasm.

The murals have become a highlight for people walking the John Muir Way and other visitors to the area. The grand plan is for visitors to be attracted to come and see the

murals, then stop at the Prestoungrange Gothenburg for refreshments, which in turn helps fund more murals in the future. Experience in other parts of the world has shown that local people soon cotton on to the economic benefits of the additional visitors to town and start to open gift and antique shops, tea-rooms and even other arts venues.

Art Classes and Witchcraft

But the work of the Arts Festival doesn't end there. The re-opening of the Prestoungrange Gothenburg in June 2004 has offered many more opportunities for arts activities. The function suites have been used to stage many plays, musical events of all kinds and several art exhibitions. It has also prompted a range of pottery based on the famous 'brown-cow' teapots produced in the area in the past. These, and matching cups and jugs, are used in the Gothenburg's Bistro and are for sale to the public.

Most of the ten paintings by well-known artists commissioned by the Arts Festival over the last six years also hang permanently in the Gothenburg.

Art classes run by the Arts Festival have been enthusiastically received by local people. Poet Laureate, John Lindsay has commenced work and an annual £2,000 Burriss Bursary was started in 2004 that supports a local artist to produce work

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relevant to Prestonpans in the 21st Century.

Witches have played a strong part in the history of Prestonpans with scores of people in the area wrongly accused and killed for witchcraft in the 16th and 17th centuries. In October 2004, Prestonpans hit the headlines across the world when the Baron Courts used the last of its official powers to pardon some 81 people who had been put to death on Baronial lands for being witches. Several murals and an exhibition tell the story for visitors and each year the shameful treatment and pardon will be commemorated in re-enactment plays.

Murals shown opposite – 1: Morison's Haven by Kate Hunter **2: Transportation** by Andrew Crummy **3: Burns Mural** by Kate Hunter **4: Chapman's Fair** (painting) by Michael McVeigh **5: Power Station** by Andrew Crummy



THE PRESTOUNGRANGE GOTHENBURG

The Gothenburg has been a well-loved feature of Prestonpans life since it was built in 1908 – and has a fascinating history

Its recent renovation has secured some of the best examples of the arts and crafts movement in East Lothian. It has also allowed it to return to its original purpose – not just to sell alcohol, but to provide gracious facilities for local workers and their families and to fund good works in the community.

What is a Gothenburg?

At the end of the 19th century, a temperance movement with a difference was taking shape.

Some British philanthropists realised that although alcohol abuse was doing harm, it was unrealistic to expect total abstinence. Instead they aimed to create a system where alcohol was allowed, but not promoted. Food and family functions were encouraged instead.

Their inspiration came from Sweden, and from Gothenburg in particular. In the 1860's distilling in Sweden was licensed for the first time, with a fee payable, and retailing came under the control of the local authorities. This system raised a great deal of money for the community, but did little to limit the consumption of vodka.

The version adopted by Thomas Nelson and his partners, who established the Prestoungrange Gothenburg in 1908 and many other such pubs in Scotland, aimed also to limit alcohol abuse. Managers in these bars got bonuses only for sales of food and non-alcoholic drinks, rather than beer and spirits.

All profits above a five per cent return for investors were used to fund facilities in the community. Over the years bowling greens, reading rooms and even cinemas were built with the proceeds from Gothenburg pubs in Scotland. As many as 600 appeared across the UK, with more than 60 in Scotland, usually within mining communities.

There are only two others still operating under the

Gothenburg system today – the Dean Tavern in Newtongrange and the Armadale Gothenburg. Gradually, the vast majority abandoned their charitable aims and were taken over by commercial enterprises, as was the Prestoungrange Gothenburg in the 1950s.

Now, nearly 100 years later, the Prestoungrange Gothenburg has returned to its original ethos where all surpluses above five per cent go to the Arts Festival for future arts initiatives.

A Loving Restoration

When it was first built, newspapers of the time compared the Gothenburg's interior with the most fashionable tea-rooms in Edinburgh.

Although it had been allowed to run down over the decades, it still retained most of its original arts and crafts features when it was bought by the Baron Courts in 2000.

It has taken several years to restore the Gothenburg fully and to carefully extend it to create substantial new function suites that double as an arts venue. It even

has its own micro-brewery, producing ales which honour those made by the original Fowler's Brewery which closed in the 1960s after 200 years of brewing in Prestonpans.

Visitors will be particularly struck by the original feel to the James Fowell Bar – stunning stained glass, unique tiles, fireplaces and doorways. Hard to miss is the vivid ceiling mural which is an interpretation of the original 16th century Prestoungrange painted timber ceiling, now housed at Merchiston Tower in Edinburgh.

The beautifully wood-panelled James Park Lounge next door contains an extensive collection of early 20th century photographs of Prestonpans. It also offers tea served in reproduction 1930s tea-service based on that made at Bellfield's





Pottery which stood on the site of the Gothenburg's car-park.

The Lord Mayor's Bar upstairs is named in honour of a visit by the Lord Mayor of Göteborg in Sweden in 2003 to help celebrate the building's return to the 'Gothenburg Principles' after nearly 100 years.

The Thomas Nelson Suite, named after the Edinburgh publisher who put up the original finance for the building in 1908, can accommodate up to 100 people. It is extensively used for weddings and other celebrations, as well as concerts, plays, exhibitions and a host of other events.

The Gothenburg also houses a growing collection of paintings by Janice McNab, Michael McVeigh and others, several murals, contemporary stained glass art, and an exterior sculpture and mosaic.

Opposite page: Arts & Crafts details at the Gothenburg, and Aprons from the Fowlers Brewery

This page, top: The James Fewell Bar, 2005

Right: The Edwardian bar at The Goth



THE GLOBAL CONNECTION

In August 2006 Prestonpans is to host the sixth conference of the Global Association of Cultural Arts and Tourism

This event will see people from all over the world flocking to the town to inspect its progress and achievements. Yet back in 1999 not many people in Europe – never mind Prestonpans – had ever heard of that Global Association. That year the Baron of Prestoungrange was on a family holiday in Canada and at his sister Anne's suggestion went to the dinner theatre showing *Midsummer Night's Dream* in a small town called Chemainus. No one could help noticing that the busy little town was covered in murals, on shop walls, businesses and homes.

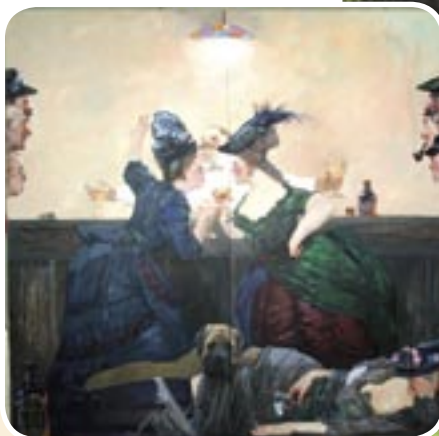
Making enquiries he learned that Chemainus, once a thriving timber town with a population of 2000, had fallen on hard times when its principal saw mill closed. As a means of regeneration, a local man called Karl Schutz had persuaded the town to start painting murals on various walls, recording the history of the area.

People began visiting the town to see the murals, spending money in local shops and restaurants. The people of the area felt involved and liked having the history of their kith and kin recorded so publicly. Now the town attracts 400,000 tourists each year, largely to view the 50+ murals, and they attend the dinner theatre, cafes and shops that have sprung up. A major 74 room suites motel has just been opened by the Chemainus Festival working with Best Western.

The word spread and other towns facing economic crisis followed the Chemainus example. Before long the Global Association of Cultural Arts and Tourism came into being and now includes 60 towns around the world, from Prestonpans to California, Australia and New Zealand (www.globalartsandtourism.net).

After just a few years as a member, Prestoungrange was chosen to host the sixth Global Mural Conference. This is a signal honour and plans for the four-day event in 2006 are already well advanced – including a golf tournament at the Royal Musselburgh.

A major highlight will be a concluding civic reception and potlatch which will include raising a 40-foot totem pole in honour of the inspiration from Chemainus, with that town's Mayor in attendance. The pole is being carved in Prestonpans from a Canadian red cedar donated by the people of Chemainus. Canadian First Nation people will lead workshops with schools and other groups who will also be involved in the carving process.



Left: *Cat Fight* by Wei Luan

Right: A commemorative Canadian totem pole



THE BARON COURTS

The Baronies of Prestoungrange and of Dolphinstoun were acquired by Dr Gordon Prestoungrange in 1997.

He still holds the title of Baron of Prestoungrange and his youngest son, Dr Julian Wills, is Baron of Dolphinstoun. His maternal family links are older. His mother was born in Musselburgh, his great great uncles were the famous golfers Willie and Mungo Park and his grandfather worked as a miner at Prestongrange.



Prestoungrange dates back from 1189 when it was first granted by Robert de Quincy to the monks of Newbattle Abbey. On the land given to them they were able to pan for salt [hence Priests'- toun- pans], start Scotland's first coalmine and create the international harbour that was later known as Morison's Haven. 10,000 acres of feudal lands

at one time included most of West Pans and a good deal more to the west and south of the town.

In the 16th century the monks lost ownership of the title and land to the Kerr family who in turn passed it to the Morrisons. Later the Grants and Grant Sutties took over. Until the early 20th century the Barons of Prestoungrange lived at Prestongrange House which is now the home of the Royal Musselburgh Golf Club.

The Barony of Dolphinstoun was held by the same family from the 17th century and has remained a largely agricultural area. Both Baronies are managed together as a charity through the Baron Courts of Prestoungrange and Dolphinstoun.

November 28th 2004 saw the abolition of feudal tenure in Scotland which removed the direct link between Baronial titles and their ancient feudal lands. It also meant

the end to ancient rights of Barons to dispense justice. To mark the occasion before their powers were lost, the Baron Courts of Prestoungrange and Dolphinstoun convened what was to be Scotland's last Session of a Baronial Court. Several petitions were granted, including one to Pardon the 81 witches wrongly killed on Baronial lands and to create an annual day of remembrance in their name each October 31st.

Gordon Prestoungrange

Now aged 67, Gordon Prestoungrange divides his time between his home at Milton Malsor in Northamptonshire and an apartment in Winton House, Pencaitland when in Scotland. He is married to Avril, Lady of Prestoungrange, and has three sons, Duncan, Mathew and Julian.

Gordon was educated at Reed's School and served as a young Royal Air Force Officer as part of his National Service. His further education included reading Political Economy at Reading University, an MPhil in Educational Administration at The Open University and a PhD at Cranfield in Marketing Logistics.

He worked in marketing and advertising before going into teaching and research at Bradford and Cranfield Universities, with international appointments for the UN and in Canada, Australia, the USA and Finland. He joined the global private business school sector in 1982 as Principal of IMCA England. He has written 34 books and was founder in 1967 of MCB University Press, the largest academic management publishing house in the world today. He was also founding editor of three management and marketing journals and has been Publisher of Burke's Peerage and Gentry since 1999.

Left: Gordon Prestoungrange, The Baron of Prestoungrange

Below: The Prestoungrange and Dolphinstoun Coats of Arms



Arms of the Much Honoured Baron of Prestoungrange



Arms of the Much Honoured Baron of Dolphinstoun

The Prestoungrange **Gothenburg** in Prestonpans



Since it re-opened in the summer of 2004 the Prestoungrange Gothenburg has become a firm favourite with locals and visitors alike.

It's brimming with character and warrants a visit just to admire its historic arts and crafts features and myriad original artwork. The staff will be happy to show you around.

But first and foremost the Prestoungrange Gothenburg offers great food and refreshments and unsurpassed service – particularly in its upstairs rooms for private or public functions and events. There the Lord Mayor's Bar and Thomas Nelson Suite offer magnificent décor and views across the Firth of Forth – serviced by a lift for easy access.

The James Park Bistro downstairs serves lunches and dinners, as well as morning coffee and afternoon tea, all days of the week. Sunday lunches are a speciality here.

The James Fewell Bar adjacent to the bistro is the place to go for a relaxing beverage and live music and entertainment. Those interested in real ales will be fascinated by the Fowler's microbrewery at the rear and can even sign up to help brew 100 gallons or so.

As well as catering for clients' private functions and events, a year-round programme is on offer by the Arts Festival and its associates – from plays, to classical and pop music, exhibitions and classes. In this respect today's restored Gothenburg does justice to its original principles by providing a community recreational resource for Prestonpans and beyond.

To find out what's on, check in the local press or at our own website on the internet at www.prestoungrange.org/gothenburg.

THE PRESTOUNGRANGE GOTHENBURG

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