

## **What are the Baron Courts?**

The Baron Courts are the charitable organisation established in 1998 by the incumbent Barons to capture, interpret and present as widely and as imaginatively as possible ... *the 1000 year history of the baronies of Prestoungrange and of Dolphinstoun.*

The baronies have been held by a host of significant individuals in Scottish history since they were first granted in 1084 to the Monks of Newbattle Abbey, and their nominal and heraldic pedigree over the millennium is shown in this brochure.

The power and authority wielded by the Barons across most of the period have since 1948 been formally replaced by the state. The sixth Act of the reassembled Scottish Parliament in 2001 also brought to an end the direct link between Scottish baronial titles and the lands from which they were originally derived.

Yet the opportunity, even the social responsibility, for Barons to make their contribution within the lands from which their titles arose is as great as ever today. And that is precisely what is happening here in Prestoungrange and in Dolphinstoun. It is the Barons' belief that through such an educational charitable initiative the communities concerned will both feel greater pride in themselves and attract greater attention from the wider Scottish and tourist populations. It is also the well demonstrated fact that as this is achieved the economic wellbeing of the communities advances too.

## **Industrial and Social History**

The Lothians hold an especial place in the life of Scotland. They were long the national granary and they are of course on the strategic east coast road from England to Edinburgh and onwards to the Highlands. The Battle of Prestonpans was fought and won by Bonnie Prince Charlie in 1745 on baronial lands.

At Prestoungrange in particular the monks made a great success of salt panning, coal mining and agriculture. Later potteries and brick making as well as chemical bi-products of the coal were added. Fowler's Ales were brewed in town from 1745 until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. An active harbour at Morison's Haven enabled international trade to take place. But today none of these activities survive and the Haven has been in-filled after extensive silting by the 1930s. Unemployment since the mine and brewery closed in the 1960s has been a continuing challenge, and the area is now becoming an Edinburgh commuter suburb with excellent road and rail links.

The Barons throughout the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries played their part in both managing and contracting to others the several industries including agriculture. Now they are ensuring that the history is told out and, as may be possible, described in such a way that it can be interpreted and understood in today's context. The old coal mine, the brickworks and the sites of pottery kilns located at Morison's Haven have become the Heritage Museum of the East Lothian Council Museum Service. Whenever possible, the Baron Courts work in partnership with them on their projects.

The Baron Courts also work in partnership with the Prestonpans Local History Society, and in 2001 republished their excellent reflective anthology *Tales of The Pans*, available at the Web Site and from the Society.

### **Historical Research and leading to Published Booklets**

The first task the Baron Courts set in hand was the creation of a series of 10 000 word monographs by local authors on a wide range of historical themes. The full listing is given in the panel here. They are all available for sale as booklets at the Heritage Museum and in local bookshops, and are also published by Prestoungrange University Press for gratis download from the Internet at [www.prestoungrange.org](http://www.prestoungrange.org)

So that schools can make good use of them for their regular Scottish 'Local History Investigation' visits to the Heritage Museum, each is accompanied by a Teacher's Guide at the Web Site. The Heritage Museum Visitors' Centre is located within the material remains of the first 'Industrial Site' in Scotland. Its innovative use of steam power is exemplified in the 1879 Cornish Beam Engine which was used to pump water from 800 feet below ground. The steam heritage is celebrated every month when the Prestoungrange Steam Society rolls the 19<sup>th</sup> Century *Prestoungrange* locomotive past the Dutch designed Hoffman Brick Kiln and the remains of eleven Beehive Ceramics Kilns.

### **Pots at the Pans tell their own story**

The second initiative was to draw upon the Heritage Museum's Exhibition of Pottery made at the various potteries in the Prestoungrange area to create a Virtual Exhibition open to all on the Web Site.

This led immediately to the decision to create 'Limited Edition Reproductions' of some of the most memorable items, and also to create a 'Speculative' 21<sup>st</sup> Century Collection. This latter initiative works with local potters to design new items that might well have come from Prestoungrange had the old kilns still been there to manufacture.

### **Mural and Canvas Artists at Work – *The Arts Festival Society***

For the third initiative, the detailed historical research undertaken has served as an in-depth briefing first for Janice McNab and most recently for mural artists to tell the history in their paintings. In this latter respect the Courts are greatly indebted to the world leader in Global Arts Tourism from Chemainus, BC, Canada, Karl Schutz, who has visited with and advised on the lessons learnt in his home town and around the world by others in the USA, Australia and New Zealand. The Barons in their turn have visited leaders and artists in Chemainus, 29 Palms, Kati Kati, Kyogle and Mendooran.

Janice McNab was commissioned in 1998 for three works shown here that captured her own distinctive interpretations of our history. The first shows *The Foreshore* at Prestoungrange where brine for the Saltworks was panned for nearly 300 years and the famous Pandores Oysters were collected. The second is *The Miners' BathHouse*, the first to be erected in Scotland by the new National Coal Board in 1946; and the third the famous *Prestongrange Ceiling* discovered during restoration at Prestongrange House, since the 1920s the Club House for the world's oldest golf club, The Royal & Ancient Musselburgh. ( That ceiling has since been relocated to Napier University's Merchiston Tower in Edinburgh.)

The Mural Paintings got into their stride in October 2001 when Kate Hunter, a local muralist, completed the first two panels literally on the Foreshore of Prestoungrange. Extensive refurbishment of the seawall made it a secure surface for an inaugural work of the very highest standard which has been widely acclaimed in the community. It is the first of an initial series of five for which the Baron Courts has provided the necessary funding. Additional funding to sustain the programme, as long as walls are available and a story can be told, is constantly being solicited in accordance with the Baron Courts' ethos of community regeneration and tourism - for example from the Scottish Arts Council's *Artists in Public Places* Fund.

### **The Prestoungrange *Gothenburg* Reopens**

If all this research and artistic endeavour sounds like thirsty work, the good news is that the fourth initiative taken by the Baron Courts is to reopen the Prestoungrange *Gothenburg*. This was built in 1908 and managed in trust as the miners' pub of Prestongrange. It was acquired in 2001 and will reopen in 2003 as a bistro style facility, coffee shop and microbrewery.

The *Gothenburg*, not surprisingly, is Listed with Historic Scotland as having particular heritage importance, with a fine carved wooden bar and Edwardian décor in the main area. Upstairs is an excellent meeting room and functions suite and a south facing conservatory.

The whole facility will be themed with the history of Prestoungrange and Dolphinstoun and act as a local shop window for all the works of the Baron Courts. The building stands immediately inshore from Kate Hunter's Inaugural Mural panels.

### **Baron Courts' Miscellany**

The four major initiatives described above have naturally been accompanied by a miscellany of activities and creations. These have included:

*The Prestoungrange Tartan* - with the accreditation of the Scottish Tartan Society, the tartan shown here was adopted in 1999 that captures and blends those of the great

baronial families during the past millennium – the Kerrs, the Morisons and the Grants – with the current incumbents - the Park Sept of the McDonalds.

***Baronial Regalia*** - Since medieval times the Baron's Officers had their own regalia and the barons to this day have their own formal scarlet and ermine robes. Those belonging to the Courts are shown including the Ellwand carried by the Baron Sergeand and the Badge and Chain of the Baron Bailie. The baronial horns are also depicted.

***Grants of Arms by Lyon Court*** - Both Barons petitioned Lord Lyon, King of Arms, for his Warrant to Grant Arms and these were both accepted as shown after extensive research. The Baronial badge of Prestoungrange has been used as the logo for the Arts Festival Society.

***Burke's Peerage & Gentry*** - In summer 2001 the Baron Courts, together with the Heritage Museum, hosted the launch of Volume 1 of the 19<sup>th</sup> Edition of *Burke's Landed Gentry in Great Britain: The Kingdom in Scotland*. This title had been out of print since 1970 but is now thanks to the work of the Barons and their publishing associates once again available both in print and on the Internet at [www.burkes-landed-gentry.com](http://www.burkes-landed-gentry.com)

Today's Barons are grandson and great grandson of a Prestoungrange miner at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, James Park, as shown in their maternal family pedigree by *Burke's*.

***Appointed Providers to the Baron Courts*** - In its work the Baron Courts are especially assisted by a number of craftsmen and suppliers who become our 'Appointed Providers'.

A C Dalglish of Selkirk provides all our tartan fabric needs assisted by Scotcrest of Blairgowrie; Hamilton & Inches of George Street Edinburgh create our gold, silver and enamelled regalia assisted in wood by Paul Colbert of Bedford; Glenkinchie, the Lowland Malt from Pencaitland, is the Appointed Provider of Whisky and Bramble of East Linton of Liqueur. Robes are made by Ede & Ravenscroft in Chancery Lane, London. Peter Drummond-Murray is Heraldic Adviser and Hugh Peskett is our Genealogical Researcher. Chris Bonnar is the Courts' Buildings and Construction Adviser.

***Staff and Trustees of the Barons' Courts and Arts Festival Society*** - Jane Bonnar, MA (Hons) Edinburgh in Scottish Historical Studies, is the Director of the Prestoungrange Arts Festival Society, and Executive Director of the Baron Courts at large. Anne Taylor is General Manager of the Baron Courts.

Sylvia Burgess BAdmin MSc is the Baron Sergeand and Mathew Wills Yr. of Prestoungrange BA MBA ACA the Baron Bailie and Procurator Fiscal. Mathew together with Gordon, the Baron of Prestoungrange, BA DMS MSc MPhil PhD, Julian, the Baron of Dolphinstoun BSc MSc PhD and The Lady of Prestoungrange constitute the Courts' board of trustees as a charity in Scotland.