

THE PAINTED PRESTONGRANGE CEILING



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community. These principles have been re-established for The Prestoungrange Gothenburg as it opens its doors in 2004.⁶⁸

Restoration has been a major project of great significance for the community. The opportunity has been taken *inter alia* to restore an element of local saliency to the ‘lost’ Prestongrange Ceiling. The main bar area named after the founding manager from 1908–1927, James Fewell, now provides a home for a piece of new Prestoungrange ceiling art consciously executed in the style that Mark Ker used some 423 years earlier at the baronial hall. Andrew Crummy, an internationally recognised painter and mural artist from East Lothian, received the commission. He had already made a significant contribution to the Prestoungrange Murals Trail which has unfolded across the town of Prestonpans since 2000.

Andrew Crummy researched and prepared the details now included on the ‘new’ Prestoungrange Gothenburg ceiling. As well as key elements from the original ceiling, in the best ancient traditions of the grotto the new ceiling contains images of people and places associated with the town’s history. Amongst them are the 1st and 14th Barons of Prestoungrange, David Spence whose inspiration led to the foundation of the Prestongrange Industrial Heritage Museum, and East Lothian Provost Pat O’Brien who assisted the preservation of The Gothenburg in the 1980s. Not least are portraits of a local craftsman who worked on the Prestoungrange Gothenburg restoration in 2003–2004 together with a human skull from the 1745 Battle of Prestonpans which he found as a lad, and of Jim Forster, President of the Historical Society.

As with the original Prestongrange ceiling the background colour is the very attractive red oxide with an intensity that would have been present in 1581. The colours used are red oxide, white, mid grey and black outline again as in 1581. The paints employed was a quality flat oil which gives no reflection and artist’s oils. Such a use of oils is similar to English Renaissance painting of the period where oil was often substituted for size as a binding medium. It is intended to avoid the problems of deterioration that Hodkinson’s Report to the National Trust Tempera Paintings Committee outlined and which are associated with tempera painting in an environment which also houses a bar and a micro-brewery. Additionally it allowed a varnish to be added to further protect the painted surface.

The ‘new’ Prestoungrange ceiling at The Prestoungrange Gothenburg is a most substantial work of art in its own right.

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