

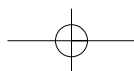
23

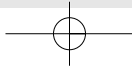
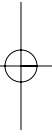
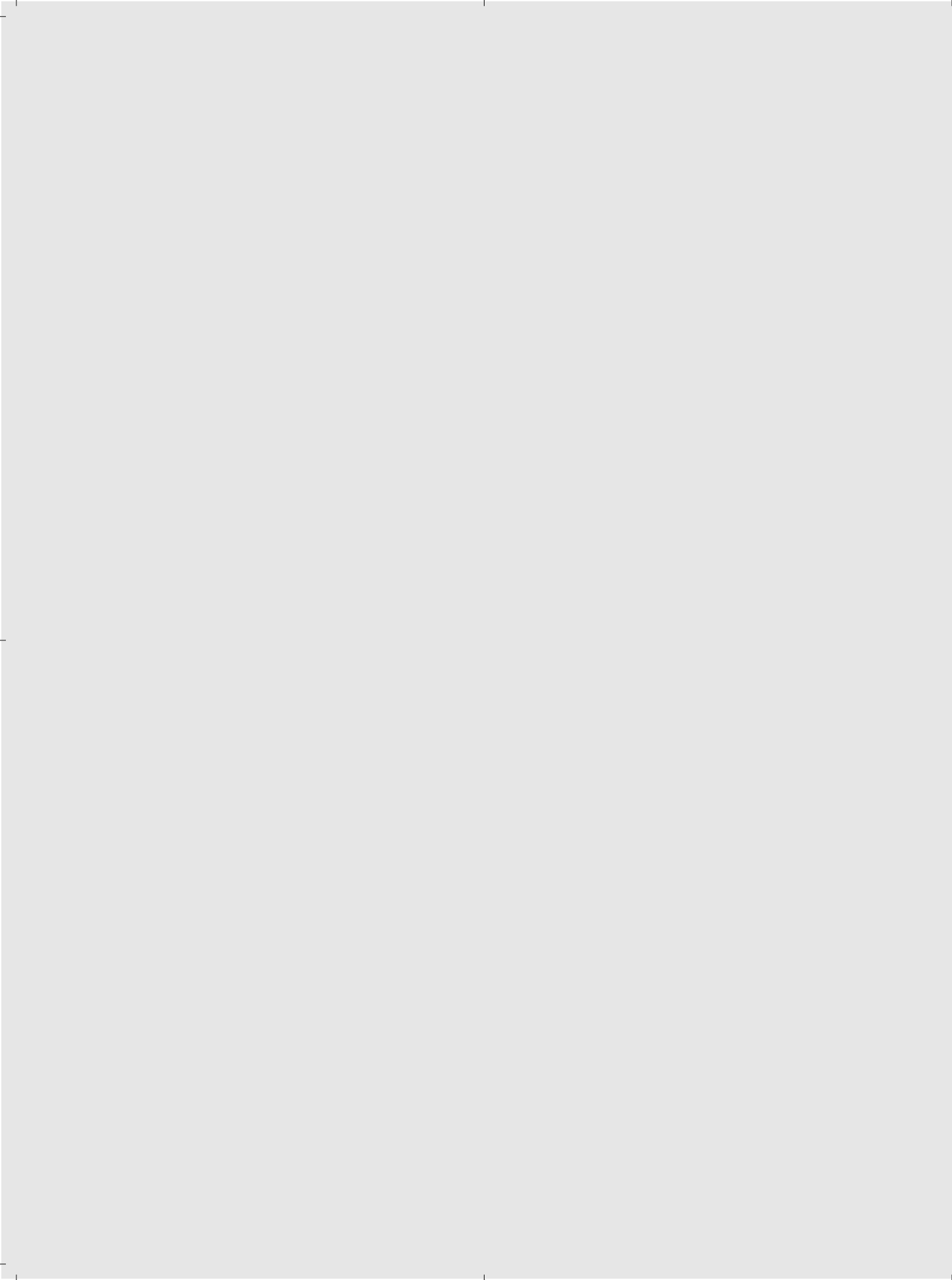
# The Prestoungrange Totems 2006

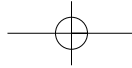
Gordon Prestoungrange

15

14







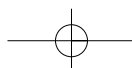
## 1. ORIGINS AND NATURE OF TOTEMS

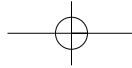
Free standing totem poles, house posts and talking sticks are present throughout the NW Pacific Coast of Canada and the USA. The unique artistic symbolism used is common to all tribes there and is thought to have emanated before Contact with Western civilizations from the Nass River region [Barbeau,1932]. Chemainus, the inspiration for the Prestoungrange Arts Festival Murals Programme, lies in this region on the ancient lands of the Cowichan tribe of the Coast Salish people, which today is known as the east coast of Vancouver Island, British Columbia. The Coast Salish people are relatively recent adherents to free standing totem pole carving having traditionally preferred house posts and external longhouse wall painting. Their art was more minimalist than their northern neighbours, and designs to infill were simple and geometric. They also had very strong artistic traditions using the same designs in basketry, rugs and blanket making. Most recently they have created Cowichan sweaters and hats that are world famous and examples of this were specially created and brought to the Potlatch held in Prestonpans on August 18th 2006.

In common with all other tribes their totems, whether free standing poles or posts or talking sticks, were the first 'public' art form in the area that sought to tell out local tribal and family history. Contrary to popular belief it seems clear that the greatest flowering of free standing totem pole carving came after Contact, as far better tools for carving became available and demand from anthropologists and souvenir hunters reached fever pitch at the end of the 19th century more than a century before Chemainus launched the world movement for historical mural painting. Yet by the mid 20th century there was a very real danger the traditions and skills would be lost and those totems which remained would end up in museums. However, a small group of family descendants of Charley James including Ellen Neel and her step-uncle Mungo Martin, with the encouragement of the University of British Columbia, ensured that a renaissance in carving took place with revenues eventually enhanced by increasing flows of tourism and the emerging policies and funding by governments intended to foster greater respect for and preservation of local cultures. The Northwest School of Native Art was established near Hazelton in 1969. Duncan just to the south of Chemainus became *The City of Totems* with a carving shed and Native Heritage Centre. Victoria, the capital of British Columbia saw a BigHouse dedicated to Mungo Martin at a potlatch and totems raised in its Beacon Hill Park in 1956 standing at 127' 7" – at that time the tallest totem pole in the world.

### Poles tell of rights and origins

Early missionaries had misunderstood the purposes of totems, which were certainly not raised to heathen Gods nor were they worshipped. Neither was the great tribal gathering known as the potlatch, which was outlawed from 1884 until 1951, a heathen festival. It was a grand opportunity for chiefs of tribes to demonstrate their wealth by lavish entertaining and gift giving ... and the opportunity for the rights and stories recorded on the totems to be spoken aloud and re-enacted since there was no written language beyond the artistic symbols. The same occurred at the less lavish winter dance celebration the





## The Prestonpans Totems – 2006

tribes arranged at the conclusion of their nomadic lifestyle in the summer months of the year. This tribal requirement to winter together but to roam in the other months seeking food and surpluses for barter trade meant that many of the small villages they built with their accompanying totems were short lived. Not only did the red cedar tree which they always used have a life of no more than 50 years as a totem, but the tribe would probably have migrated earlier [Harold, 1996]. But the winter months, snowed in as they normally were, did provide ample time for the carvers and basket makers and blanket weavers to accomplish their work.

The history captured in the totemic art was most frequently mythological, and associated with the animals and birds that were such a significant part of their lives. The stylized images of the animals and birds carved on the totem not only reminded the tribe's story tellers and dancers of their tribal ancestry but also, by their presence on the totem, conferred the very 'right' to tell the story and dance the dance at all. Those looking for an analogous symbolism in Western civilization compare the totem figures with uniquely held heraldic family coats or arms, badges and crests.



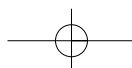
### Raven's Role

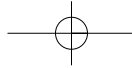
Within the tribe are clans and each clan or phratry is frequently based on common matriarchal descent, depicted with its own particular animal or bird on its totems. Each animal or bird had a wide range of tales to tell and many tell of times before the world was as it is now, of a time when animals and birds could be transformed into humans and back again. This can be well illustrated by the stories from throughout the region associated with the

Raven, which is the symbolic bird included on the Prestoungrange Totems because of its existing place in the heraldic arms of the Barons of Prestoungrange and of Dolphinstoun. It can be represented with beak and wings either down or up.

The Raven is one of the most significant birds in Pacific NW Coast totemic art, and the quintessential *organizer* or transformer. He is also characterised as a *trickster*, a *relentless schemer*, a *practical joker without remorse*, a *catalyst*, *lustful*, a *teacher*, *impulsive*, *shameless and cunning*. Quite a portfolio and sufficient to embellish and accommodate almost any Clan tale. The Raven is accordingly a figure to be both honoured and derided. He is both inventive, intelligent and innovative yet also greedy and selfish and especially mischievous.

In order to accomplish one of his greatest feats, freeing the Sun Moon and Stars for us all, he needed all his adjectival talents [Stewart, 1993]. '*Raven was going along*' ...long ago and heard of a greedy chief who kept the world in darkness by holding the sun, the moon and the stars in three wooden boxes in his house. He would occasionally raise the lids and let light spill out for a short time but always closed them back again quickly. Hearing of these boxes Raven though it would be a grand idea to bring light to the world but since he could not gain access himself to the boxes knew he would need a most





## The Prestonpans Totems – 2006

---

cunning plan. Fortunately there was a pretty daughter to the chief who went to collect water every day from a stream and he resolve to seduce her by transforming himself into a hemlock needle [or was it a speck of dust] that floated into the water pitcher and thence into her drinking supply. Having swallowed the hemlock needle Raven ensured that she became pregnant and gave birth to a dark, beady eyed boy who grew at an astonishing rate. He was forever tearful and cried most especially for the box with the shiny ball inside. But the greedy chief refused to allow him to play with it until one day, exasperated with the crying he succumbed to his grandson's wishes and opened the boxes. Raven immediately transformed himself into bird form, released the moon and the stars and, grasping the sun ball in his beak flew up and out of the smoke hole in the tepee. Higher and higher he flew and farther and farther, spreading light all across the world for us all to enjoy. And having done that he threw the sun ball high into the sky where as one can see it still remains to this day. As if such an accomplishment was not sufficient, other Clans will tell how '*Raven was going along*' and gave the world fire, gave it humans and created the salmon.

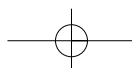
Similarly compelling myths about vital aspects of daily life are shared by Clans that have been granted their retelling rights at potlatch, who claim their descent from Bear or Bear's Mother, from Beaver; from the mythical beings Thunderbird, Kolus, Hoh-Hok, Sisiutl, Dzoonkwa or the Watchman; from Eagle, Hawk, Shark, Frog, Wolf or Whale. Just as Raven has its common symbolic representation in all totems so do each of these beings have their own.

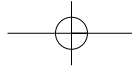
### Preserving Authenticity for Totemic Art

The art form of red cedar tree carving and painting, and the meaningful symbols that have evolved and are used in association with it are, as already noted unique and comprehensively stylized in presentation. They tell not another person or another tribe's stories but their own. There can be no rationale for imitation elsewhere in the world when the authentic work is capable of creation through its traditional owners' leadership and craftsmanship.

As such the First Nations of the NW Pacific Coast of Canada and the USA have developed patterns of partnership around the globe as well as continuing their work on the home soil. Most significantly they are prepared to travel worldwide demonstrating and employing their skills at carving and finishing totems that celebrate their culture and heritage whether the totem is to remain in a natural wood, be feathered, grain blasted or painted. They will share in carving work with local craftsmen as their apprentices and educate those who are involved in their own stories underlying the symbolic representations, helping new tribes and families to select and represent their own stories and rights. They will share the meaning and substance of the ceremonies associated throughout including the final raising ceremony and potlatch after which the art and the stories contained therein 'become public'. They seek to ensure that the new stories of such totems at large, and of the particular totems now created, are told and retold, in print, on film and at potlatches for the future, just as they are now and in the past in their own homelands.

In this way their culture and their wholly unique art form in carved red cedar is preserved and maintains its proper authenticity.





## The Prestonpans Totems – 2006

---

### The Copper and The Hat

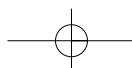
Two final items also widely represented must be mentioned. Firstly, the Copper, created from the metal after which it is named, was created after Contact with Western civilization gave access to such material. Its ownership became a symbol of wealth and normally chiefship. On its unique shape are depicted the requisite symbols of rights. It became an ostentatious act of extravagance to break a piece off the Copper and give it to another and a demonstration of 'extreme wealth' to throw the whole Copper into the sea. The Copper increasingly took its place as an additional symbol of authority on totems equaling the symbolism accorded by the Hat and the cylindrical accumulation atop it of further Hats in a tower. Each segment of such a cylinder reflects an act of especial recognition of the individual whose Hat it is often recording an additional potlatch held.

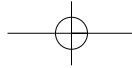
## 2. WHY THE PRESTOUNGRANGE ARTS FESTIVAL RAISED THE PRESTOUNGRANGE TOTEMS IN 2006

The Prestoungrange Arts Festival's own first Contact with Chemainus, British Columbia arose from a chance visit by the author and Lady Prestoungrange to that town to see Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* in 1999 on mid-summer's eve. It had long been an aspiration that never seemed to get met until a family vacation with the author's sister living in Victoria BC afforded the opportunity. The venue was the Chemainus Dinner Theatre, a truly significant outgrowth of the town's original and highly successful programme of historical mural painting. The impact of the murals was so obvious that it was inevitable that the question was asked: who was the visionary and driving force behind the original and ever evolving notion of using the arts to stimulate an otherwise declining/ threatened community? The local store keeper selling the 3rd Edition of the Chemainus Murals' Souvenir Book was able at once to direct us to Karl Schutz. He lived just out of town off the main highway but had been a worker at the local sawmill, the sole significant employer, that had closed down leaving almost the whole community without work. Karl Schutz was always willing to discuss what his small town had accomplished – he had indeed developed a break even consultancy service to advise others who might wish to follow a similar path.

### The Chemainus Story

The Chemainus story has been told and retold across four continents. But it merits repeating and repeating because it has all the elegance of simplicity and the most extraordinary powers of socio-economic achievement. Some sixty small towns and cities have deployed the approach and many now belong to the Global Association for Murals Art & Cultural Tourism that was founded in 1998. Perhaps the most authoritative account appeared in the *Smithsonian Magazine*, entitled '*The Little Town That Did*'. It recounts how, when faced with the most dire of all consequences for the township, Karl Schutz suggested an approach that he had observed in Rumanian monasteries on a recent holiday there. The medieval church had told the story of Christianity and of its many Saints in paintings on their walls so that pilgrims and regular visitors





## The Prestonpans Totems – 2006

---

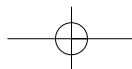
could see for themselves what they could not comprehend in Latin or might never have the opportunity to hear as the Word. Karl Schutz proposal was that, taking advantage of a history of the area already available, mural painting should be used to attract tourists to the town. There were two major objections from those who Schutz calls the nay-sayers: firstly it would not work; and secondly if it did it would transform the town into a tourist mecca. Reluctant approval was eventually won for the first work of art on the understanding that if it was unacceptable it could always be painted out. It worked. It is indeed a tourist mecca but local people took great pride in it and the town's economic future became assured –even more so when the saw mill reopened. The rest is history. Today Chemainus attracts of the order of 400,000 tourists each year, enjoying the public art, purchasing souvenirs and murals books and taking food and refreshments. And the Dinner Theatre, with its own student population, affords countless opportunities for return visits by those who have already seen and enjoyed the murals. A Suites Motel has just been completed.

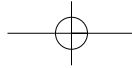
Seeing and hearing this amazing story occurred at an opportune moment for the Prestoungrange Arts Festival. During its first two years under Jane Bonnar's leadership it had sought to work with Education Officer Annette MacTavish at the Prestoungrange Heritage Museum. A series of Historical Research Studies had been conceived for use with schools and Teachers' Guides had been developed. But abrupt personnel changes meant that such a goal was increasingly unlikely to be achieved. However, if the example of Chemainus was followed, the history already researched, analysed and elegantly published could act as formal briefings for mural artists and for all who wanted to understand the stories told in murals in much greater depth. And so it transpired. Not only were the initial ten studies thus used but research and publication has continued apace and the murals programme continually draws upon it. The studies both inspire the artists and those who gaze upon the murals seeking a more comprehensive understanding of the issues and the personalities addressed.

### Global Lessons to be Learnt

At a direct level, the Prestoungrange Arts Festival simply intended to run with the murals idea. It obviously worked. But there was clearly a great deal more to the Chemainus success story, and the successes gained elsewhere around the globe, that should appropriately be understood to gain maximum advantage. And fortunately in 1998 Karl Schutz had, along with another dozen Charter Members, established a 'Global Association for Murals Art and Cultural Tourism'. Accordingly the first deliberate learning step was taken when Karl Schutz, working with Doris Bucklin from 29 Palms California, was invited to Prestoungrange to give a two day Public Workshop. He was listened to most carefully. Designs for the first two murals were soon thereafter commissioned and tabled with the local Council for their approval, but nay-saying was encountered. Unperturbed, the murals were painted on the baronial sea walls looking across the Firth of Forth accessible along the foreshore; and 'virtually' displayed on land where they would have been if the nay-sayers had not prevented it.

The second learning steps involved a programme of visits to as many of the other murals towns around the globe as possible over a period of four years. It





## The Prestonpans Totems – 2006

---

entailed traveling across the globe to Foxton and Kati Kati in New Zealand, to Sheffield Tasmania, to Mendooran, Kurri Kurri and Kyogle in New South Wales, to Bowen in Queensland, to Exeter, Lompoc and Tulare in California, to Vale Oregon, to Philadelphia with more than 3000+ murals, to Scarborough Ontario, to Legal, Grand Prairie and Stony Plains in Alberta, to Vernon and Saanich British Columbia and then as far north at Whitehorse in the Yukon. And in tandem with such field visits, where friendships were built with many members of the local murals societies and splendid press coverage achieved for the benefit of their local initiatives, the team made a particular point of attending and contributing at two biennial Global Association Conferences [Moosejaw Saskatchewan 2002 then Ely Nevada 2004], at two Californian Regional Seminars [Lindsay 2003 and Bishop 2005], and at the Pacific Mural Gathering [Bowen 2005].

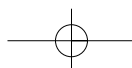
### **Invitation to Convene the Global Conference in Prestonpans**

Such willingness to work hard at understanding the global achievements of so many towns and cities [now in excess of twenty have been visited], and the fact that Prestoungrange was the first European member of the Association, sufficiently endeared us to the Association's Board in Moosejaw in 2002 when it was resolved that the 2006 Biennial Global Conference should be convened in Prestonpans by the Prestoungrange Arts Festival. That was a signal honour because there were then and there remain many towns and cities with surely more to share than we can aspire to after just eight years. But in accepting the honour bestowed on us by the Association we resolved to make sure its members who attended received something special. We further resolved to make 2006 a target date for the achievement of a wide range of goals that we had already set for ourselves. And finally we agreed to develop the Global Association's own website @ [www.globalartsandtouurism.net](http://www.globalartsandtouurism.net) to ensure better communications one with another between each Conference. But the 'something special' for 2006 was resolved to be the Prestoungrange Totems. They afforded, we felt, a magnificent opportunity to say thank you:

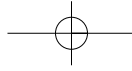
Firstly, by using the most ancient art form known to the Cowichan Valley where Chemainus stands, a fitting tribute could be given.

Secondly, by representing the Global Association's Gala Dinner as both a Civic Reception and a Potlatch a proper and fitting tribute could be paid to all those in the global murals community who had welcomed us so warmly and shared all their experiences with us whilst at the same time reminding them of how much they owed to Chemainus.

The 2006 Prestoungrange Potlatch and the Raising of the Totems thereat was not however the first occasion on which the Arts Festival had had the opportunity to say thank you to the inspiration of Chemainus. At a Civic Reception at the Arts Theatre in Chemainus for the author and Lady Prestoungrange in 2002 the Prestoungrange Arts Festival was granted the Freedom of Chemainus and given the Key to the Town. In return, we promised to organize a celebratory 2003 Burns' Supper at the Chemainus Arts Theatre in partnership with local Scottish cultural societies of which there are many – British Columbia was extensively settled by Scots in the late 19th century. It was at that outstandingly successful Supper that Jon Lefebure, the Mayor of North Cowichan [which includes Chemainus], agreed that if the Prestoungrange Totems were to be carved they must be carved from red cedars







## The Prestonpans Totems – 2006

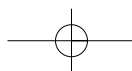
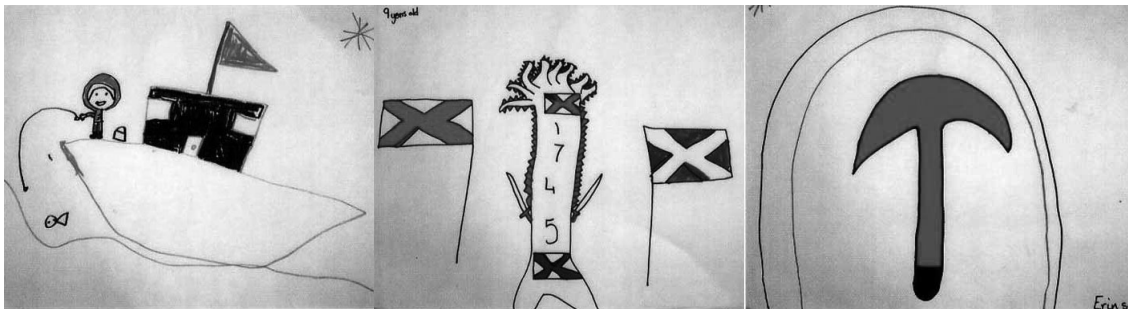
and that his Council would be honoured to donate such trees for the purpose. All that the Prestoungrange Arts Festival had to do was to ship the trees to Scotland - in which task they fortunately had on the ground assistance from the author's sister and Dr Karl Schutz himself.

### Scotland's Earlier Experience of Totems

One of the most intriguing aspects of the decision to carve the Prestoungrange Totems for 2006 was the *subsequent* discovery that there was already a totem heritage at the National Museums of Scotland from an exhibition many decades ago. Furthermore a contemporary Scottish wood carver, Kenny Grieve of Brotus Rural Crafts, had since *Treefest 2002*, [The Year of The Tree], been vigorously pursuing a truly flourishing programme of totem pole carving in partnership with NW Pacific Coast First Nations carvers who had been making regular visits to Scotland supported amongst others by the Scottish Arts Council. He was embarked on a programme to raise at least thirteen totem poles right around the nation. Accordingly, notwithstanding the wholly discrete rationale for our own particular excursion into totemic art, it was clearly appropriate to work together with this much broader scale initiative, and a joint working group was formed with Kenny Grieve and the National Museums of Scotland. Kristine Cunningham from the Prestoungrange Arts Festival was appointed overall Team Leader. The access which Kenny Grieve had to the most distinguished First Nations carvers in the American NW Pacific was to prove invaluable.

The poles carved under the leadership of Kenny Grieve at Brotus Rural Crafts had involved thousands of school children across the country. Prince Charles had donated a 130' Douglas Fir log from the Queen's Balmoral Estate and the National Trust for Scotland a similar Fir standing at 170' from The Hermitage, to create poles for Dunkeld and Dundee; poles had also been carved at Bennachie, at Strathdon, at Dalbeattie, at Kelty, at Stranraer, at Port Patrick, at Vane Farm near Kinross, at Dunblane, and at Peterhead. In all instances the local history and folklore of the town was represented and each and every community was actively involved in the carving. In Bennachie this included a man's betrayal by his sweetheart and a key to the big cave there. Kenny Grieve had lately offered an Exhibition at The Scottish Parliament in March 2005.

As more and more communities in Scotland have come to realize what a powerful moment the carving and raising of a totem pole can be, more and more townships are seeking to follow suit.



## The Prestonpans Totems – 2006

### 3. SYMBOLS TO BE CARVED FOR PRESTONPANS

'*Raven was going along and ...*' decided that the symbols to be carved on the Prestoungrange Totems should also be debated and discussed throughout the community and especially in the schools in the town of Prestonpans and right across the former baronial lands. And they should deliberately reflect the history of the town and in some proper manner the sharing of cultures with Chemainus. A competition was run at The Prestoungrange Gothenburg by the National Museums of Scotland to select symbols designed by youngsters in three historical areas – coal mining, Morrison's Haven and the Battle of Prestonpans 1745. Contributions from others community groups were captured. Additional inspiration came from the 1995 Commemorative Banner created for the 250th Anniversary of the Battle of Prestonpans which is on display at the Industrial Heritage Museum in the town.

After six months '**Raven was going along and...**' resolved:

At the top of the pole **Raven wished his own image to appear**, wings folded with a Pacific North West Coast Indian Face in his care.

Directly beneath himself Raven wished to see the **Face of Barony** in Prestoungrange and Dolphinstoun which had led the town's industrial and agricultural pursuits for five centuries, and inaugurated the Arts Festival five years ago, the Face of Barony to be wearing five hats to celebrate the many potlatches known as Chapmen's Fairs held on St Jerome's Day in the town for so many years. Two of the hats were to be baronial chapeaux and the other three Indian First Nations. The Face of Barony was to be robed proper in scarlet to the left with a record of the 81 witches pardoned in 2004 together with five brass buttons being Pound coins and to the right in an Indian blanket with Wolf Eye design and below Xwa Lack Tun's own signature. The robe and blanket were to be held together by five silver buttons being Canadian Quarters.



## The Prestonpans Totems – 2006

Beneath the Face and the Robe of Barony was to come the **Face of The Prestonpans Miner** with lamp aglow [created at St Gabriel's Primary School by Declan]. Coal was the energy source in Prestonpans which fuelled the Industrial Revolution in Scotland and for some four centuries coal mining provided much of the town's employment. When all the pits closed in the 1960s the town fell wounded. Further mining symbolism created by Erin [also from St Gabriel's] was to show the Miner's hands and a **Pick in a Tunnel**, and beneath it the **Heraldic Symbols of Coal and Salt** – the black diamond and the six pointed white star – as granted in the Prestoungrange Coat of Arms.

Beneath those symbols Raven determined that the derived industries of Prestonpans should be shown the first being **Pottery** represented by a Bellfield 'broon coo' teapot which had originally been made in the 1920/ 30s on the site of the Prestoungrange car park where carving of the pole was eventually to take place. Beneath the teapot there should be a **Prestongrange Brick**, being one of those made in the town's own brickworks and used when The Prestoungrange Gothenburg was originally built in 1908. Behind it should be a representation of the charitable goals of that public house in the form of a Scottish five Pound note and a Canadian five Dollar bill.

To the left of the Brick should be carved the **Thorn Tree** made famous at the Battle of Prestonpans in 1745 where Colonel Gardiner was mortally wounded together with the date 1745 and the Scottish Saltire and the Cross of England's St George. [This symbol was contributed by Melissa of Prestonpans Primary School.] And to the right of the Brick should stand a **Garb of Corn** from the Barony of Dolphinstoun as depicted in its Grant of Arms.

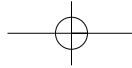
The final grouping of symbols should represent **Morrison's Haven**, with a **Ship Afloat** on the Firth of Forth, a wavy sea, filled with **Fish** [images created by Jamie and Jack from Prestonpans Infant School]. And last, beneath those waters, **Salt and the Coal** once again depicted heraldically.

'Thus Raven, going along, decreed that it should be .....'. Yet before any carving could begin red cedar trees must be felled and the logs transported to Scotland.

### 4. FELLING CHEMAINUS RED CEDARS AND THEIR TRANSPORTATION TO SCOTLAND

The logistical tale began early in November 2004 when the two magnificent, donated, red cedars were felled in the forests of Chemainus in North Cowichan by Tim McTiffon under the direction of Forester Darrell Frank. They also attended to their limbing and peeling [which meant they gave up their branches and their bark].





## The Prestonpans Totems – 2006



**Step 2** was to get the trees from their home forest to a carefully chosen 'timber yard' with access for a spacious container, and this was accomplished by one Scotty Thomson, needless to say born in Scotland with an accent to prove it. [*No problem. Just let me know where and when you want them.*]

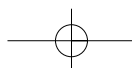
**Step 3** involved securing a 40' container. Tim Strang of Hill's Native Art in Vancouver who ships finished totems across the world was able to introduce Karl Schutz to Anjali Sadarangani of Wilson Freight. [*No problem shipping 40' trees to Scotland. Just give me the dates and we look after the rest.*] They scheduled November 29th for collection but did have a wee problem and the container arrived a day late. So loading was eventually accomplished, most auspiciously, on St Andrew's Day.

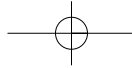
**Step 4** saw the loading of the trees at the 'chosen timber yard', and where better than the world-famous Chemainus 'sawmill' that closed in the early 1980s thus creating the challenge that Karl Schutz and others met with their murals programme. Nowadays reopened for business and owned by Weyerhaeuser, it is managed by Jason Kearns, a former neighbour of Karl Schutz who until recently led Chemainus based Planks Window Factory which was purchased by Weyerhaeuser. Jason Kearns and his colleague David Turnbull from South Island Reman Division quickly agreed that: *'Weyerhaeuser would love to handle the loading and if Scotty brought the logs they'd do the forklift truck work, push them in, fasten them down. Nothing to it!'* In fact one log was a tad too long but a saw helped it fit the box. Daniel Derby directed three forklifters as the logs were transferred from Scotty Thomson's trailer to the container in record time. The *Ladysmith-Chemainus Chronicle* told the story on December 7th .

**Step 5** was the journey to Vancouver and Montreal. For this the container took the night ferry across from Vancouver Island to the mainland where fumigation of the logs was undertaken under Anjali Sadarangani's direction. Routing by sea in the Pacific then through the Panama Canal had been considered but the more direct route across Canada was eventually selected. So the logs boarded a freight train for Montreal, Quebec, and from there made their passage along the St Lawrence Seaway on the opposite Atlantic coast.

**Step 6** was the journey across the Atlantic Ocean from Montreal to Edinburgh. The vessel selected by Anjali Sadarangani of Wilson Freight Canada was *Canmar Pride*, Voyage 216E, Reference # 15732130, departed December 9th which then arrived in Europe in time for transfer to a feeder line for the final sea journey to Scotland to be on dockside by December 24th, Christmas Eve. Another auspicious date.

**Step 7** took place in the docks in Edinburgh where the trees required Forestry Commission authorization before they could be moved along to Prestonpans. Here Sylvia Burgess, the Baron Sergeant at the Prestoungrange Arts Festival, and Kristine Cunningham took over co-ordination from Karl Schutz and





## The Prestonpans Totems – 2006

Anne Wills. And once the MasterBill of Lading was to hand Paul Armstrong of Wilson Freight UK began arranging inspection times for Tom Francis of the UK Forestry Commission shortly after Christmas. [Because the trees had been limbed and peeled in the forest, and fumigated in Vancouver, no formal Import Licence was necessary from the Department of Trade and it was anticipated that Forestry Commission protocols had been met.] The relevant Plant Health Order read:

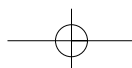
*‘Wood of Thuja L., including that which has not kept its round surface, originating in Canada. Without prejudice to Article 3(1) Part A of Schedule 2 and Schedule 3, the wood shall be stripped of its bark and shall be free from grub holes which are larger than 3mm across. Phytosanitary Certificate or Industrial Certificate required to accompany the trees.’*

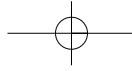
Notwithstanding such seeming comprehension of the necessary issues, however, the Forestry Commission quarantined the logs on arrival since there was no Phytosanitary Certificate, only an industrial notice of fumigation which alone would not suffice. [The *Ladysmith-Chemainus Chronicle* picked up on that story January 18th 2005 when Prestoungrange met with the shipping team in Chemainus to make ‘thank you’ presentations of Glenkinchie Single Malt.] However, before too much demurrage expense was incurred the Forestry Commission released the logs to proceed by road accompanied by an Order on the Baron Sergeand that the final remains of bark must be peeled and burnt. [Since we had no professional competence in this respect the Officer concerned was gracious enough to undertake this final task for us pro bono.]

**Step 8** followed the logs release under Order from the docks. It involved moving the cedars by road to a temporary resting place in the neighbourhood of Prestonpans as all the other arrangements for their carving came gradually together over the following three months. It needed to be able to receive the large container in the first instance, have room for its unloading and indoor cover for the logs protection. Sir Francis Ogilvy at Winton House was able to offer the use of the main barn behind Winton Hill Farm, and by January 5th 2005 the trees had completed that stage of their journey.

**Step 9** took place at 07.30 am on Monday April 11th 2005 when under the Baron Sergeand’s command, A.G. Thomson’s *Bonnie Scotland* low loader and JCB arrived to load the logs with great skill and finesse and take them to The Prestoungrange Gothenburg’s seashore on the Firth of Forth in Prestonpans for their first Scottish photocall; and most importantly their blessing by First Nations carvers. [These carvers were led by Xwa Lack Tun of the Squamish Nation in Canada’s Pacific NW and were already in Scotland working with Kenny Grieve of Brotus Rural Crafts in association with the National Museums of Scotland, which has had five years of Scottish Arts Council support for a series of millennium totems around Scotland carved from Scottish logs.]

The logs, already well accustomed to media attention in British Columbia, lay proudly side by side in the East Lothian sunshine at Prestonpans as photographers from the *Glasgow Herald*, *East Lothian Courier*, *Edinburgh Evening News* and *East Lothian News* chose their preferred angles – and cast of





## The Prestonpans Totems – 2006

characters. *Reporting Scotland*, the BBC TV News programme each evening for the whole nation, also attended and recorded interviews with Xwa Lack Tun, Kenny Grieve and the Baron of Prestoungrange.

The BBC camera crew indeed followed the logs on A.G. Thomson's low loader to St Joseph's at the back of the Pans to see them safely lodged in their carving shed, where carving was eventually to begin in August 2005 – with many a community group and school visit sharing in the excitement and learning a great deal as they talked and watched and 'helped' a little.

Step 10 followed a summertime residence for the logs with St Joseph's and saw the carving there in August 2005 of a 6' high totem taken from one end of the second log. Xwa Lack Tun and colleagues met with members of the Prestoungrange Arts Festival and school groups to share their culture and music and to explain the nature and purpose of totemic art forms.

The 6' totem depicts the Raven with the heraldic crosslet held in its beak and for the winter months it stood attracting a great deal of attention in the James Park Bistro at the Prestoungrange Gothenburg, prior to painting in March 2006 under the supervision of Xwa Lack Tun. This 6' totem also served as a model for the youngsters who were to create designs prior to the carving of the main pole.

## 5. CARVING AND PAINTING THE POLE

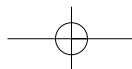
### *'Raven was going along and carved the main totem pole'*

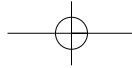
The original intention was that the main pole [it will be recalled that there are two logs] should be carved at St Joseph's but it was soon accepted that there was inadequate room for the visitors expected as work progressed. So the potential venue was moved to the Prestoungrange Heritage Museum but even that was frustrated by local Council health and safety regulations on chain saw use on the site. So finally the car park at The Prestoungrange Gothenburg, where BBC TV had first shown the logs, was selected. Yet these little local difficulties were dwarfed by the events at Glasgow Airport when Xwa Lack Tun and Tawx'sin Yexwullo [*alias Splash*], the invited carvers, were denied permission to enter Scotland since they had no work permit. Immigration officials were adamant and it took a final appeal by Viscount John Thurso MP to the UK Minister for Immigration at Westminster, Tony McNulty, before common sense prevailed.



Kenny Grieve provided a small marquee to cover the carving which certainly kept the rain away although the NE winds at times got the better of it. More than 400 visitors came from far and wide to observe, discuss and in many instances participate in the carving. They included Englishman Paul Colbert who created the Baronial Ellwand in 1998, who had been entrusted on this occasion with carving Talking Sticks for each Baron.

The depictions of Prestonpans industrial history created by youngsters were faithfully incorporated in the overall design.





## The Prestonpans Totems – 2006

---

The press came to visit and wrote as glowingly as the visitors from far and wide, including John Muir Walkers and those from earlier Scottish totem pole towns. A selection of comments from the book provided tells it all:

*‘Brilliant idea; fantastic work’. ‘Very good to see other countries’ culture and skills’.*

*‘Absolutely stunning’. ‘This is a very interesting project and totally different from anything ever done in this town before’.*

*‘Truly represents Prestonpans town’. ‘Wonderful to see craftsmen so at ease with their tools and materials’. ‘So impressive what can be achieved in well less than 2 weeks.’*

*‘Amazing, its such a beautiful gift. Great project for the community’. ‘Absolutely amazing wood and people. The meeting of cultures is something to celebrate’.*

*‘Just great to watch it take shape from a tree!’. ‘Like being back in Canada ... great memories’.*

*‘Brilliant; Great idea; Awesome; Fabulous; Amazing - culture in the Pans!!’*

*‘At once creative and traditional. This tree stood for 75 years in Canada, it knows what it is doing’.*

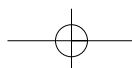
The pole, still weighing well over a ton and as carved 32' 8" long, was carried aloft to the grounds of Prestoungrange House in Prestonpans by Preston Athletic Youth Football XI fresh from their victory in the East Lothian Cup Final. And week commencing May 17th painting began. Tom Ewing and Adele Robertson, under the leadership of Andrew Crummy, took responsibility. They collaborated with Kenny Grieve and Peter Hill so that the steel spine could be applied for the pole's raising on August 18th and Quantity Surveyor Gordon Eadie made the calculations for the concrete base and plinth on which it now stands. [This pattern of raising was deliberately used so that the pole could be moved around to different locations to tell the story of Prestonpans.]

## 6. TALKING STICKS AND COWICHAN KNITTING

In addition to the totem pole itself, two other First Nations artifacts were created for the potlatch to be held on August 18th and Hudson Bay Company blankets [used as currency in earlier days] and reproduced as souvenirs by the Hudson Bay Company to this day were brought to Scotland.

The most significant artifacts were the two Talking Sticks crafted by Paul Colbert, who had earlier created the Baronial Ellwand. One each was carved for the Barons of Prestoungrange and of Dolphinstoun.

*“Raven was walking along ...”* and firstly invited Paul Colbert, Walking Stick Maker from Kempston Bedford but a regular at all Scottish Game Fairs,



## The Prestonpans Totems – 2006



to carve two Pacific West Coast style Talking Sticks one for each Baron. It was he who had created the widely admired Prestoungrange Baronial Ellwand with Hamilton & Inches in the last century. The Talking Sticks are ceremonial mini-totem poles and are carried to all significant meetings and potlatches by their proud owners.

Both Dolphinstoun and Prestoungrange, said Raven, shall receive a Talking Stick carved in hazel which shall have been dremelled to remove its bark with a round headed router. It shall be treated overall with rosewood stain and have chevrons interspersed throughout. It shall be finished with coats of Danish oil derived from natural tung vegetable oil.

Both shall have five hats atop the hazel carved in mahogany with gold balls proper to their rank. The hazel shall have red and white chevrons at intervals which are common to both shields on their Arms. Finally, both shall have a band of copper at their top, a red deer horn holding one of Raven's own feathers, and a copper ferrule at their base.

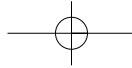
In all other respects they shall differ. Dolphinstoun shall have the garb of corn and green crosslet from his Arms and the Man in The Moon and poppies from his espoused Compartment. His name D O L P H I N S T O U N shall be carved around the stick with green lettering and the H and O set amongst the chevrons.

Prestoungrange's differencing shall include the coal black diamond and six pointed white star for salt from his Arms and his red crosslet. The Sun and the Thorntree shall be derived from his espoused Compartment and the name P R E S T O U N G R A N G E shall be carved around the stick with black lettering, the O and G set amongst the chequering.

*“Raven was going along ...”* and secondly asked Emily living in Duncan, City of Totems on Cowichan lands, to knit four sweaters for the male members of the family of Prestoungrange. And Emily so knitted them to the traditional Cowichan patterns and travelled to the Potlatch in Prestonpans in August 2006 to give them as Raven had wished to Duncan, to Mathew Yr of Prestoungrange, to Julian of Dolphinstoun and to Gordon of Prestoungrange [The full story of Cowichan knitting is recorded by Meikle (1987)]








---

 The Prestonpans Totems – 2006
 

---

**REFERENCES**

- Barbeau, M., [1932,1984], *Art of the Totem*, Hancock House, Surrey, BC
- Grieve,K., [2002] Scottish Totem Poles Project reported @: <http://www.brotus.co.uk/Brotusfiles/poles/polenews02.html>
- Harold, H., [1996], *Totem Poles and Tea*, Heritage House, Surrey, BC
- Jensen, V., [1992], *Where the People Gather: Carving a Totem Pole*, Douglas & MacIntyre, Vancouver BC
- Jensen, V., [2004], *Totem Poles of Stanley Park*, Subway Books, Vancouver, BC
- Joniatis, A., [ed] [1991], *Chiefly Feasts: The Enduring Kwakiutl Potlach*, Douglas & MacIntyre, Vancouver, BC
- Kramer, P., [1998, 2004], *Totem Poles*, 2nd Edition, Altitude Publishing, Canmore, Alberta
- McGrail, S., [2005], *Stories in Wood*, The Scots Magazine, November, pp 496-499.
- Meikle, M., [1987], *Cowichan Indian Knitting*, UBC Museum of Anthropology, Vancouver, BC
- Meisler, S., [1994], 'Take a Look at the Little Town That Refused to Die', *The Smithsonian Magazine*, May.
- Meyer, G., [1992], *American Folk Art Canes*, Sandringham Press & University of Washington Press
- Muckle, R., [1998, 2003], *The First Nations of British Columbia*, UBC Press, Vancouver, BC
- Reid, B. and Bringhurst, R., [1996], *The Raven Steals The Light*, University of Washington Press
- Stewart, H., [1979], *Looking at Indian Art of the NorthWest Coast*, Douglas & MacIntyre with University of Washington Press
- Stewart, S., [1993], *Looking at Totem Poles*, Douglas & McIntyre, Vancouver, BC
- Shearer,C., [2000], *Understanding Northwest Coast Art*, Douglas & McIntyre, Vancouver, BC.
- Wyatt, G., [1999], *Mythic Beginnings: Spirit Art of the NorthWest Coast*, Douglas & MacIntyre with University of Washington Press

