

REVANS UNIVERSITY
Postgraduate Diploma in Arts Tourism (8 ALQs)
Prestoungrange Set 1- 2003/ 2006
Set Adviser: Karl Schutz

ALQs # 1 & 2:

HOW ARTS TOURISM CAME TO THE BARONY

There were two catalysts to my somewhat eccentric baronial decision to make Arts Tourism the outward face of CyberFeudalism at Prestoungrange in the 21st Century.

The first was my frustration with the failure of the initial strategy of working with the East Lothian Council's Education Officer at The Prestongrange Heritage Museum. We had created ten excellent Historical Booklets on the 500 years of industrial activity in Prestonpans with Teaching Guides to help schools get greater benefit from the Museum services. But the schools had not signed up and the Education Officer had walked out after an altercation with her boss – some related actions of ours with her consent were the final straw! What we had on our hands was one more £50 000 project to create resources nobody was ever going to use! I had seen so much similar waste in education over my career that I was, as stated earlier, frustrated even ashamed. “The best laid plans of mice and men “

The second catalyst was to occur in British Columbia, Canada. My wife had for many years asked that I take her to see Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* somewhere romantic on the Eve itself. I had been desultory about the request which is unlike me normally; not sure why. Repeatedly desultory. But I had an inspiration in 1999 when we were due to stay with my sister Anne in Victoria BC during mid-summer. We would normally take one more visit to the Butchart Gardens and the rest. Greatly pleasurable, but could *she* not I find somewhere on the Island offering the play on the right night. And as fate would have it there was. The Festival Theatre in Chemainus. “Odd spot”, said Anne, “the town's full of murals”. But we went anyway and because it was a dinner theatre we went early to browse the murals and the souvenirs. And it was in a souvenir shop that I asked the proprietor ‘who was the genius behind all the mural painting’, and he quick as a flash sold me a book on the subject and pointed to the name in the front, one Karl Schutz. (That name appears on this assignment's masthead as Set Adviser!)

A phone call by the salesman and I was around at Karl's homestead within the hour. And his tale was simple; we have now heard it and read it on a score or more occasions from the Royal Lounge at Prestongrange House to *The Smithsonian Magazine*. It never fades with the telling. He and Betty were touring some years before Chemainus lost its apocryphal sawmill and were struck by the way that the Christian faith had told its story effectively in ages of illiteracy by painting it on the walls of monasteries and churches. If they could do that any community that knew its history, or could find it out, could do the

same. Fortunately, said Karl, a wise one in the Chemainus region had done just such a thing at the turn of the 20th century..... and so of course had we at Prestoungrange. At once I could see how the frustration would evaporate if we joined the cause.

....and the formula is generalisable; it works ‘everywhere’

But of course Karl Schutz went further. He told me of the closure of the sawmill and the potential decimation of the entire community that was Chemainus. Instead he believed that tourism could grow if the history was told. And the “nay” sayers said it would not work as they do all around the world. But it does work. And before I have completed this Diploma I am hopeful that I can hypothesise and test several notions as to why it works. It was not just Karl Schutz that made it work; many others have done the same simply by copying the formula. So it was the formula that worked and Karl Schutz was simply, (and that sounds so patronising but that is not my intention), the one who first divined the formula as expressed in murals and had the persistence and the leadership skills to let the formula work its magic in his township. Once the rest of the world had seen it worked, and seen it written up and receive awards around the globe, their task was easy! All they had to do was convince their local communities that their township might be different in a dozen cultural ways, but the formula was robust.

But the formula is for a later in depth discussion. And so is the formulation of my hypotheses.

Feasibility and All That

I am repeatedly advised that all good works proceed from a feasibility study (or a Business Plan if they are bankers howsoever); and secondly that we should talk to the Council and the locally elected representatives. Rationality and Democracy were two of the greatest sources of entrepreneurial destruction in the 20th Century. There is so much evidence around us that motivation and intuition are superior mind sets to rationality; and that feudalism with its dis-concern for democratic representational processes and consultation and reconciliation has the potential to get more substantive achievements. Furthermore my initial flirtation with the local caucus and its apparatniks had shown them to be feudals dressed only in democratic garments.

As an academic and a marketing researcher throughout my working life I have always espoused grounded theory, mainly from the frustration of reading through statistical data sets that show no human feelings or understanding and finish with a test of significance at this that or the other level as Fisher would have wished.. And as a ‘small team’ leader since my school days I have always intuitively been a populist, which is not of course the same as being popular. A better term might well even be a ‘1920s syndicalist’. I espouse action to see what happens; call it heuristics; call it emergent theory; call it suck-it-and-see; it is always the same pattern of behaviour. Have an idea, kick it around with folk who are interested in the area and have the power to do something about it; refine it and then get on and do it.

Let's Get it From the Horse's Mouth

Like some 20 or more towns before Prestoungrange, we resolved to hear the storyline on our own territory, from the horse's mouth. At no great expense and fees settled in Scottish currency that Karl had never beheld before, the guru travelled to Prestoungrange to tell us all the way it is. The Royal Musselburgh Golf Club (located today in the vast old Prestoungrange baronial hall) volunteered its Royal Lounge facilities gratis and the 'good and the artistic' showed up for a Workshop; and we all talked long and hard about Wow Factors, Nay Sayers and the Need to Pin down Artists' Copyrights, and How Much to Pay a Good Artist, and How to Prepare Walls (never before a seawall quite like ours of course), of Local Authority Concerns and so forth.

And as chance would have it, the barony's major asset was 400 metres of beach down to low water and a defining landward seawall some 4 metres high running from Prestoungrange Road to Redburn Road along the Firth of Forth. To gain access to that beach the easiest route was down the primitive stone steps at the foot of Redburn Road right opposite an Arts & Crafts building that used to be a pub and was now a private home for a Salvation Army Captain and his son, Scot, an excellent Scottish and British Lions Rugby player. (One of our first initiatives was to design and introduce some somewhat better steps and later a fine bench seat at the top. And as a final thought, a railing was placed at the head of the steps to stop the population toppling over the seawall on any dark and stormy night.)

...and so to Paint

The tale was told and Karl flew back to Canada after his first immersion in Scotland, perhaps bemused. (In fact he has never expressed his views about how he felt. We should have asked; we must shortly ask for them!) The consensus of those who attended was that it sounded OK although Prestonpans was hardly a Canadian sawmill town. The main democratic political luminaries had stayed away but some apparatniks had attended and made favourable and indeed some enthusiastic noises. All that was now required was to do some painting. But Karl had taught us well. You don't just paint. You ponder and worry about what to paint and you worry about on what to paint it; you worry about contracts and agreements with artists, and you worry about well lots of things really. There's a big long list of things to scare the daylight out of a rationalist; ample ammunition for not doing anything at all. But cowards die a thousand deaths and the brave only once!

Certainly we had a wall, 400 metres long and 4 metres high = 1600 sq metres. Plenty to go for. The sea lashes it when tides are high but the rest of the year it lingers around the lower metre or so. And we were overwhelmingly fortunate in having as our overall Project Director Jane Bonnar, a lady of infinite resourcefulness and daring who had just lately taken herself as a mature student through Edinburgh University's Master in

Scottish History. There were no limits to the challenges she was willing to take up, and so feudalism afforded her the opportunity!

Local building contractors were identified to create a new cement panel on the seawall immediately opposite the new steps down to the beach. It took time but at last it was ready and so was the first mural artist Jane Bonnar had located – one Kate Hunter, a local outdoor and mural painter of very considerable distinction – whose uncle it transpired much later lives on Vancouver Island and knows the Chemainus murals well. Scaffolding was erected above the waterline and the local children were summoned to launch yellow balloons into the air as Kate put the first brushstrokes onto the newly created surface. A bouncy castle for the kids mirrored the bouncy attitude of the adults. We were on our way.

Indeed we were; and Kate Hunter did us proud painting not just one mural of miners facing east but also a soap and salt mural in a right angle plane facing north. In accord with the proper protocols of Chemainus, the formula, the murals depicted real members of the community using photographs collected as part of the historical research for the ‘frustrating booklets’. And as she painted the local people of Prestonpan passed-by offering good humoured observations, appreciative comments and suggestions, expressing concern for Kate’s safety; they provided on one occasion an additional photograph that was used to introduce characters on the seawall. And one day an international muralist called Andrew Crummy who lives in Cockenzie and had taught public art at Middlesex University also passed-by and introduced himself.

By Our Works We Shall Be Known

It was no accident that we simply ploughed ahead and got painting. As has been observed there were already plenty of reasons why not; plenty of objections. Even concern expressed by democrats used to allocating budgets to tasks that, even if they were painted (i) would be vandalised; and (ii) would require regular maintenance against the weather.

We assumed no vandals would strike and that we would have to make provision in due course for maintenance against the weather as all other towns do. But we believed that if the murals won a place in the hearts of the town, and the content had their respect, then making sure they stayed well looking would frankly take care of itself like cutting the lawn and painting the house. We were dubbed naïve and took that for a compliment!

Until the first painting or two had been displayed it was going to be hard for anyone really to appreciate what we were talking about; let alone to believe it would bring economic advantage to the town. But within 24 months residents at the local Community Council were saying: “Of course the baron is welcome to invest in the town. Not long ago everyone was pulling out!” And because the murals told of the history of the town, and the people in them were the relatives of those alive today, they were respected.

The third painting went up on somebody else's wall just opposite a bus stop on the way to Musselburgh. And although I hardly ever take a bus seemingly everyone else thereabouts does. Jim Corsiter painted a humdinger of a mural on the Mine's Beam Engine as # 3. The power of that mural is so strong that wreaths have been laid at the foot of it after cremation services for family members depicted in it.

Other People's Walls

Jim Corsiter took the murals programme onto the north facing wall of Drumhuir House; and that emboldened us to seek other walls along the High Street to maximise the impact of what we were about. We took advice from the senior politician in the Council, who was also a Councillor for Prestonpans, and he advised that the best way to go was: (i) to secure the consent of the people whose wall it was; (ii) to get the artists designs together; and (iii) to submit them to the Planning Committee of the Council for its approval as though they were 'advertisements'. We held relaxed consultations with the Museum staffs and agreement was reached that the BathHouse Wall facing north would be an ideal location. Planning application was made and approved by the Committee for the BathHouse only to have it overturned by the Cultural Services Manager personally – the same lady with whom the Education Officer had previously fallen out. In one of her finest turns of phrase in writing she quite rightly commented: "Some of your ideas have merit but do not under any circumstances assume support for them from the Council".

Not quite our inclusive style; not quite the voice of the people who, if rumour had it right around town, were increasingly sympathetic even approving of what the feudal baron was up to. A top level meeting was convened at Council HQ on the matter in faraway Haddington and the Planning Committee's decision was subsequently overturned because that caucus deemed it should be; and a further application for a mural on the Coffee Shop wall in the High Street was also rejected both under out of date 'Regulations for the Control of Advertising'. Would we care to appeal was the question? No way was the answer. He who fights and runs away lives to fight another day. If we had not been lured into asking for permission as an advertisement there would have been no need for any request; and that was to be the way ahead on Counsel's advice from Edinburgh.

The BathHouse Mural was never painted on the BathHouse itself but via the virtues of the Internet it can be viewed there virtually at any time. In fact it was really, magnificently created on the seawall by Andrew Crummy, that earlier passer-by. Nor was the Coffee Shop mural painted there either although it has a virtual life precisely there. But it has an even finer tale to tell of outwitting the outwitters. For two days it really was hung where it virtually hangs all the while. From July 22nd/ 24th 2003 with the consent of Ann Watts it was on public display not as an advertisement but as a *Memorial to Prestonpans Ancestors* – and memorials are quite specifically exempted from control under the amendments to The Control of Advertising Regulations, and that had been ignored when the Planning Consents had been refused.

The 'finer' tale as must be expected was of a 'passing' Council Planner who saw the mural a-hanging on July 23rd and reported back to those who well knew they had declined their Consent. But when the dissenter went to look there was no such mural to be seen. "You've been pulling my leg", says he. "Not I", says the other. So they both go back together and lo there was no mural to see! Only Ann Watts could and did put their minds at rest. "Then you saw it, now you don't. There yesterday, gone tomorrow". Its probably a true tale, and it comes from a well informed local spokesman for town history and no doubt will improve with the telling over the years!. But whether it is wholly true or partly true, as with the wreaths at the Beam Engine, the societal message is clear without jungle drums at night. Historical murals connect with the social fabric of a town and democrats and feudal lords alike would do well to remember it. To paraphrase very badly: "Tread softly for you tread on our memories and our pride".

A Two Day Wonder? A More Serious Intent!

Displaying the mural on the wall of the Coffee Shop with Anne Watts consent was not meant as a show of bravado or as a provocation of the Councillors who had rejected it as an advertisement. The challenge we faced was that an excellent work of art full of detail of the town's history had been sitting unseen at Cockenzie Centre for nigh on 9 months. It cried out for display; and a non-confrontational strategy seemed to present itself. (Incidentally its back in limbo again now awaiting a longer lasting, non-confrontational outcome!)

The Arts and Crafts pub across the High Street from the foreshore became available for sale. The valiant efforts of the Murrays to convert it to a home/ bistro were less and less likely to be achieved. If, and the operative word was if, that premises, known locally as The Gothenburg, could be acquired and used as a centre for the Arts Festival a critical mass would start to emerge not just a few steps, a bench and some murals on the sea wall.

Well, they were acquired by the Baron and Lady of Prestoungrange, and ambitious plans were framed to restore the pub to its former glory. But it was not to be a sentimental or arty crafty place, permanently on the look out for grants and living on the edge all the while. If it was to be done it had to be seen as a sensible answer to the question: How Can the Arts Festival be Self Funding into the Future? And as chance would have it, and chance is a fine thing is it not, the very principles that had established the pub in 1908 provided the answer. Gothenburg Principles required that all profits in excess of a 5% ROI should be ploughed back into the community. And that was what we resolved to do again.

The pub would re-live and the surplus would fund the Arts Festival. And so it came to pass that a historical booklet was prepared after travelling to Goteborg in Sweden for some original research and meeting the Lord Mayor there. And once again as chance would have it, he and his wife Lisbeth were Scotophiles and more than happy to come and visit The Prestoungrange Gothenburg – on July 23rd and 24th 2003. That was the occasion of the 2 day reality mural exhibition on the Coffee Shop wall with Ann Watts'

consent and also of the unveiling by the Lord Mayor himself of a further reality mural, the seventh, on the wall of Margaret Conn's home at the top of the steps and facing straight along the High Street, and with the consent of her landlord, a housing association. As a Memorial to our Ancestors of course no planning consent was required or asked. And the BBC told the tale on TV and Radio 5 to five million listeners across both kingdoms, and 400 members of the town came out to watch the unveiling and some 70 managed to join us in the pub for lunch. (The Provost and local Councillors were invited but stayed away).

Kate Hunter had also painted the new mural at the top of the steps on Margaret Conn's wall and it told of trading links from Morrison's Haven with Gothenburg as well as the pub's links and also of John Muir whose 'Way' wends past the foot of the steps along the baronial foreshore. John Muir, as most Americans may know, was the Scottish founder from East Lothian of the National Parks Movement in the USA. (Interestingly, as soon as the Lord Mayor at our invitation crossed into Midlothian to visit the Scottish Mining Museum at Newtongrange and the Dean Tavern, another and much more successful Gothenburg pub, the Provost of Midlothian was there in a trice shaking hands and bedecked with his mayoral gold chain.)

Our Arts Festival Expands its Meaning

The inherited construct of the Arts Festival from Chemainus was of course 'murals'. But as Chemainus had moved on to its Arts Theatre where we had seen *Midsummer Night's Dream* and its School and much more, so too did we. From the outset Jane Bonnar's enthusiasm for Scottish pottery had meant efforts in that direction and a Virtual Exhibition of Pottery from Prestonpans illustrious Past as well as reproductions and 21st Century 'new' Prestonpans Pottery Competitions. But through The Gothenburg pub, by restoring the Arts and Crafts 1908 premises to its former glory – the copper work, tile work, ceilings, half-timbered exterior, and wood carving of fireplaces and bars – and building an extension to make a truly viable economic dynamo for the Arts Festival, the broader definition arrived with a vengeance.

Some would argue, and I would be amongst them, that the writers of the current 15 (and rising) Historical Booklets are artists. Their work has increasingly not only driven the mural painters but also the re-creational activities espoused. For example, the historical account of the rape of Fowler's Ales by the large national and multinational brewers in the 1960s has become the basis for a microbrewery with real ales including old Fowler's recipes right on the Gothenburg's premises and a Fowler's School of Brewing convened therein. The interior walls and new facilities will tell the historical story further, recapturing the forgotten contributions of the founders of The Prestoungrange Gothenburg in 1908. In many cases truly eminent individuals were involved from Thomas Nelson III to Lord Novar. And the research on the original publican James Fewell working right through till 1927, with written testimony from his daughter, has provided the basis for naming the main bar area the James Fewell Bar in his honour.

Walls to Ceilings

The historical story of Prestoungrange is much longer than most of the North American and Australasian towns that have joined the Global Association that Karl Schutz founded after his glorious Chemainus debut. The Prestoungrange barony itself dates back in written record to the 12th Century with countless illustrious incumbents over the intervening years after the Monks of Newbattle Abbey were dispossessed in the late 16th Century by the Kerrs, later Earls of Lothian. The area played host to the famous if brief Battle of Prestonpans in 1745 when Bonnie Prince Charlie, claimant to the throne of the United Kingdoms of Scotland and England, beat the Hanoverian forces of King George III and went on to reach as far as Leicester just some 100 miles from London. As would be expected of Scotland, there is a distillery close by which produces a very fine malt whisky, Glenkinchie, and has done so since the 18th century. That we confirm is also an art. Both these matters have spawned historical booklets in our series.

But perhaps one of the most compelling issues for us was the discovery of art already on display in Prestonpans but not brought together under a Festival umbrella. So we have deliberately adopted it, annexed it to our 21st Century Collection so to speak. The Burns' Airts Society had two fine memorials, other distinguished residents had merited statues, some sculpture was to be seen and of course considerable fine architecture in Prestoungrange Church (with its own stormy history), the town's Tower, the Mercat Cross where the Chapmen gathered for annual fairs for centuries, and National Trust and Listed buildings across Old Preston. And no building is finer than Prestoungrange House itself, now the ClubHouse for the Royal Musselburgh Golf Club but until the 1920s the castellan home for 400 years of the Barons of Prestoungrange. And in that home in the mid 16th century one baron had caused a ceiling to be painted on wooden boards and beams that it transpires is the oldest such work of art in Scotland. So valuable is it indeed that when discovered during redecoration, covered with plaster, it was removed and restored to be on display for future generations at Murchiston Tower in Edinburgh in what is now the Council Chamber of Napier University.

In collaboration with that University a comprehensive booklet on what is perhaps Prestoungrange's finest inherited work of art is now being written and of course comprehensively illustrated. But the University's tower is relatively inaccessible and has severe constraints on viewing so the ceiling itself is to be faithfully re-created in the James Fewell Bar where, as chance would have it, beams are already present separating areas of plaster that offer the ideal location. In the James Fewell Bar with appropriate lighting and ground level mirrors everyone who so wishes will be able to view and enjoy the ceiling.

And the re-creating artist, Andrew Crummy, has been mandated to add in some additional imagery on the ceiling as he goes from the years between the 16th and the 21st Centuries.

Funding from Outwith the Barony and The Gothenburg

As all Chemainus-style mural towns speedily realise, funding outwith the town is an important element of success. At Prestoungrange the Gothenburg confidently expects to become a 'destination' pub and Functions facility for folk from far afield. They are to be attracted to the excellent Arts and Crafts facilities, and to the microbrewery, and to the murals, and to the Function suites *per se*. And when with us their \$ € will help return profits above that 5% ROI to fund the future.

But we have also taken the step of founding a Scottish Charity so that donations can be made and indeed any tip/ service fee ever offered at The Gothenburg can receive a tax refund under Gift Aid provisions. Friends of the Arts Festival are invited to subscribe at \$/€75 pa on a similarly tax beneficial model.

And under the leadership of colleagues, grants from organisations seeking to encourage the Arts and more particularly social inclusion processes are being sought. Modest beginnings have now been achieved with three grants totalling some \$/ €12,000 received that are assisting in mural paintings #8 and #9 and 'open' painting classes. Support for entrepreneurial initiatives at The Gothenburg can also be expected shortly.

However, as night follows day, The Gothenburg and the Arts Festival must, together with funding from beyond their resources, become firmly established as viable economic entities. Subsidisation from baronial assets and Friends have well known limits and in all events were intended solely to kick start the whole initiative to critical mass.

Mais Pourquoi?

Perhaps the most frequently asked question in the first two years after my accession to the barony was: Why? Why are you doing this?

The objective explanation was that having made the ego-decision to acquire the lands that carried the baronial title, in a 21st Century world it was for me important to do something to justify such a title. Those in the ancient Court of the Lord Lyon who recognise the titles on HM The Queen's behalf take a similar view. In ancient times sufficient justification lay in the ownership and management of lands, in the case of my great predecessor barons and the associated Barony of Dolphinstoun, there were 10,000 acres of some of the finest arable land in Scotland to manage. But the barony in 1998 was 400 x 40 metres of foreshore and since then it has also embraced The Gothenburg and its lands. It remains modest in extent, just a few acres, but oak trees from acorns grow and why not dream of what might be accomplished by example and leadership rather than by sheer weight of land ownership? The title baron clearly affords an opportunity to 'lead by example' although it faces omnipresent dangers of ridicule. It is clear that nobody quite knew what to expect. Or even what to call me. So it was an opportunity with open scope for personal definition of what could and might be. And I took it on my son Mathew's instructions (he is my heir) "with style" - as that might be possible.

What Chemainus had shown might be accomplished was wholly distinctive and potentially much greater than ‘Historical Museum talks to Historical Office Holder’. Indeed that scenario was speedily ruled out by the Council’s Cultural Services Manager. It was her patch and stray feudal barons were not welcome. She did not ridicule barons she just warned them off. And why not?

Chemainus suggested that if we painted murals based on historical themes that would lead to others getting involved, things quite other than our own activities getting up and running, and that the economic multiplier effect would do good for the town via employment and incoming investment. To date there is so far as I can perceive no substantive evidence whatever that that multiplier effect has occurred. There is attitude change. There are fewer occasions on which people ask: Why? There are more where they say: Whatever Next? The consensus that something significant might be happening is emerging. The consensus that the murals are a Good Thing has already emerged. Pride and self esteem in the town is just that tad greater as the muralists report from passer-by conversations. So we are on our way and the future is bright.

Lord Mayor of Goteborg. OK. What Next?

It is not to deprecate my growing number of friends in Prestonpans when I say that all of us love Bread and Circuses. We like events and parties. And into our hands, by chance via The Gothenburg, has come the opportunity to make life in Prestoungrange in the years ahead if not one long party at least the venue for a series of them. And then there’s the beach (not everyone’s idea of a beach ... very little sand and Cuthill Rocks a big feature .. but the view across the Firth of Forth to Fife and the walk along the baronial lands on the John Muir Way when the tide is out, are mightily impressive). So watch this space.

The next two big events are already logged:

- May 2004: **The Gothenburg Re-opens**
- August 2006: **The 6th Global Murals Association Conference Arrives in Town**

.... and in between there are weddings to celebrate and anniversaries and real ales to brew and the Arts and Craft heritage of The Gothenburg to enjoy and more murals to paint and more pottery to make. Plenty to go for. And as we go forward the publicity we attract will bring visitors that can spend awhile in The Gothenburg as an integral component of the whole experience and buy not only souvenirs but also the necessary sustenance. Our thrice yearly magazine *Brushstrokes* in every home will ensure we are not overlooked!

And quite properly, in 2006 we shall be raising a Totem Pole in honour of Chemainus. Their idea has given the 21st Century Baron that I am a way ahead, a way to contribute in my retirement years, an opportunity to lead by example.