



Prestonpans looking at Cokerzie Power Station



Jackie Crookston, Tranent

They all have one thing in common: they are all part of the history of coal mining in the Lothians, from its earliest beginnings up to the closure of the last deep mines during the second half of the 20th century.



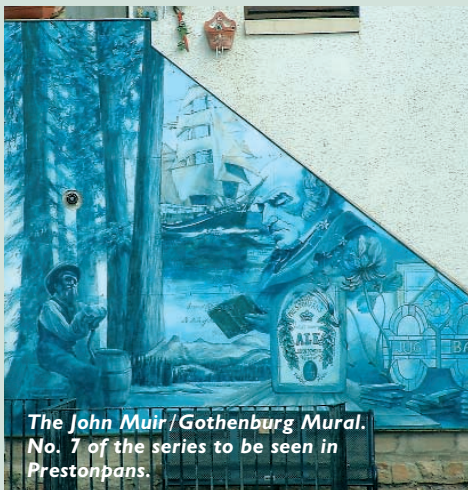
Newbattle Abbey

The Lothian Coal Trail traces this history from its earliest origins up to the industrial complexes of the 19th and 20th centuries. Some points on the trail, such as Lady Victoria Colliery, are vast monuments to heavy industry while others, like the hummocky land beneath the trees on Birsley Brae, are no longer recognisable as industrial sites.

TO THE EAST of Edinburgh are many reminders of Scotland's industrial past, especially the 'black stanes', which had such an impact on the land and its people.



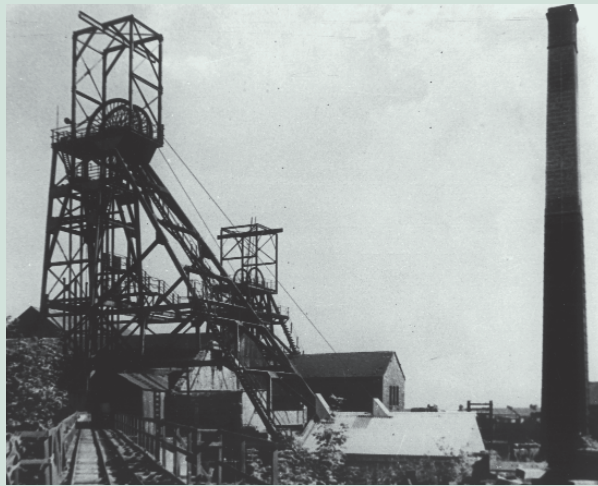
The **Gothenburg** offers a range of facilities to those interested in local traditions and history, microbrewed original real ales and maps of the town's Murals Trail, which leads visitors round many historic sites in and around Prestonpans. The ideal spot for recreation at the end of the Coal Trail with beach murals on the John Muir Way. And all those who can correctly answer eleven fair questions, one for each location, will receive a beverage of their choice. Be sure to visit!



The John Muir/Gothenburg Mural. No. 7 of the series to be seen in Prestonpans.



Prestongrange Mural. No. 3 of the series to be seen in Prestonpans.



Prestongrange Colliery © Scottish Mining Museum Trust.



The LOTHIAN Coal TRAIL

Front Cover photograph © Jim Dickson.



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1 The trail begins at **Newbattle Abbey**. Take the A7 out of Edinburgh and cross the City Bypass at the Sherrifhall Roundabout, continuing on the A7 to the next roundabout. Take the B6392 to the Eskbank Roundabout, then the B703 (Newbattle Road) to arrive at Newbattle Abbey College (private). From the foundation of the Abbey's foundation in 1140 until the Reformation in the 16th century, the Cistercian monks of Newbattle controlled vast areas of land in the Lothians. After the Reformation, much of this land passed into the hands of the Marquis of Lothian. During the 19th century, the ninth Marquis was responsible for building Lady Victoria Colliery. In 1937 house and grounds were gifted to the Scottish people and Newbattle Abbey is now a residential College. The present building is a 16th Century house with little remaining of the original abbey.

2 Continue on the B703, linking up with the A7 once more to arrive at **Lady Victoria Colliery** and nearby Newtongrange. Although the former Lady Victoria Colliery at Newtongrange is only a few minutes' drive from Newbattle, historically, it is many hundreds of years away. One of the finest surviving examples of a Victorian colliery in Europe, it was closed in 1981 and reopened in 1984 as The Scottish Mining Museum. Dedicated to the preservation of Scotland's mining heritage, its facilities include a Visitors' centre with audio-visual exhibitions, an underground roadway and coalface, and the largest winding engine in Scotland. For information on charges and opening hours, call 0131 663 7519



Lady Victoria Colliery

3 The village of **Newtongrange** was built to house miners and others working at Lady Victoria Colliery. Newtongrange is the largest surviving coal company village in Scotland and its houses were a vast improvement on previous living conditions, where miners' wives struggled to keep their families clean and fed in homes which were little more than damp, squalid hovels. The Dean Tavern on Main Street is one of the few remaining public houses in Scotland which has continuously operated the 'Gothenburg' system of management (based on the principle of redistributing profit from the sale of alcohol for the benefit of the local community) since its opening in 1899.



Newtongrange

4 On leaving Newtongrange, take the B6482, turning left on to the A68 to arrive in **Dalkeith**. In Dalkeith, in 1445, Aeneas Silvius, later Pope Pius II, reported the handing out of 'black stones' as alms to the local poor. In the 17th and 18th centuries, the town expanded rapidly in response to industrial and agricultural innovation. One of the earliest railways in Scotland, the Innocent Railway, built in 1831, linked its grain and coal merchants with markets in Edinburgh. By the 19th century, the railway network – which today forms a series of pedestrian routes across Mid and East Lothian – linked coal suppliers to national and international markets.

5 Leaving Dalkeith on the A68, travel away from Edinburgh, turning left on to the A6093, then left again on to the B6371 for **Ormiston**. During the first half of the 18th century, John Cockburn rebuilt Ormiston as a 'model' village and established a range of local industries. By the late 19th century, large-scale mining operations were taking place and the village grew in response to the need for housing. A short walk along the route of the dismantled mineral railway offers a glimpse of the scale of these past operations, with way markers identifying the site of each colliery. To follow the route, walk west from the High Street, turn right at Ormiston Miners' Club on to George Street. And join the path at the end of George Street. After approx. 0.5 km, turn to the right just before a bridge. Walk down to the connecting path and turn left under the bridge. For the remainder of the route turn left at each fork in the path to complete a loop around Ormiston. On leaving the path, turn left to return to the village.

Way marker at Ormiston



7 **Meadowmill**, with its playing fields, sports centre and bowling club was one of Scotland's earliest attempts to reclaim a former colliery site. The old 'bing' or spoil heap, has been transformed into a viewpoint with an excellent view of the East Lothian coastline and an information board offering a brief history of the Battle of Prestonpans, which took place only a few hundred metres to the north.

8 Return to Tranent and head towards Edinburgh on the A199. Approximately 0.75 km along this road, turn left up a minor road opposite the Jet Garage. Immediately to the right is a triangular, tree-covered piece of land. Beneath these trees is a medieval coal heugh, now designated an ancient monument. Mining at **Birsley** continued even into the late 19th century, ending only when the Prestongrange Mining Company – in what one local historian described as 'a fit of pique

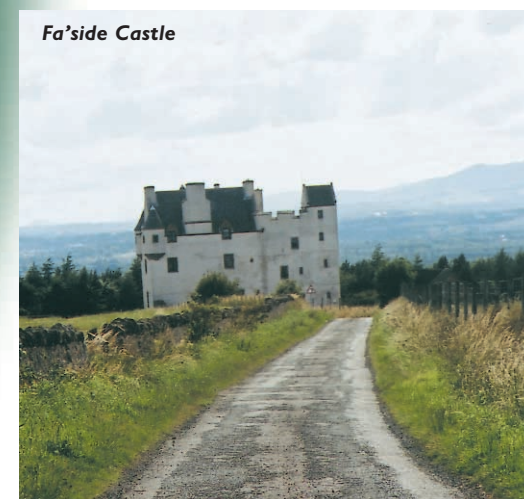


Birsley Brae – a medieval coal heugh

or pigheadedness' – responded to a dispute with another local mine owner by ordering its new shaft and equipment to be blown to pieces and its new engine house pulled down. It is reported that the stones were used in the construction of Tranent Town Hall.

9 Continue along the minor road for approx. 2 kms. Just before the road takes a sharp turn

to the left is **Fa'side Castle** (private). This castle, restored in the second half of the 20th century, is typical of many fortified houses in the Lothians and is an excellent example of the home of a wealthy landowner. The coal heugh at Fa'side, has a dark history: in the late 16th century, a miner, John Henry, was found guilty of setting fire to the coal. He was hanged and his head set on a pole outside the mine as a warning to others.



Fa'side Castle



6 Continue on the B6371 to arrive in **Tranent**. The town was at the centre of a patchwork of drift mines, 'ingau ee's' and other mineworkings and its 'cole pits' were famous throughout Scotland. In 1995, an archaeological investigation of an iron age settlement at Port Seton revealed that coal was being quarried in this area more than two thousand years ago. To follow the route of the Tranent Waggonway, begun in 1722 to transport coal to the harbour at Cockenzie and the earliest waggonway in Scotland, start from Bridge Street, taking the path which runs downhill below Bridge Street. By 1946, the former waggonway joined the harbour to the Fleets pit at Tranent and mineworkings at Ormiston, linking with the mineral railway serving Dalkeith. The waggonway route at Tranent is known as 'The Heugh' and is itself the site of ancient mine workings. The path continues across fields, passing under the Tranent by-pass to arrive at Meadowmill, before continuing across the B1361 to Cockenzie.

10 Return to the A199 at Birsley, turning left towards Edinburgh. At the Levenhall Roundabout, take the coastal route eastwards to arrive at **Prestongrange Industrial Heritage Museum**. Just before the entrance, a large scale mural of James Watt and the Prestongrange Cornish Beam Engine to your right indicates the start of the Prestonpans murals trail, which celebrates the industrial and social history of the town. The right to mine coal at Prestongrange in the 12th century is the earliest written record associated with Scotland's mining history. The Industrial Heritage Museum's Visitor Centre provides information on the history of the site and other industries associated with the coal deposits in the area. The museum is open 11am till 4pm from April to October. Admission is free. Call 0131 653 2904 for information on tours and exhibitions.

11 On leaving Prestongrange, turn right to enter **Prestonpans**. The broken bricks and pottery which litter the foreshore, the partly-excavated harbour of Morison's Haven, the cemetery headstones, converted industrial buildings and colliery sites are all evidence of the industrial history of the town of Prestonpans. Prestongrange House, formerly the house and gardens of the Baron of Prestongrange, is now the home of the Royal Musselburgh Golf Club, one of the oldest in Scotland. The Gothenburg Tavern on the High Street, is based, like the Dean Tavern at Newtongrange, on the Gothenburg principle of management. Originally opened in 1908, it is currently being restored by Gordon, Baron Prestongrange.