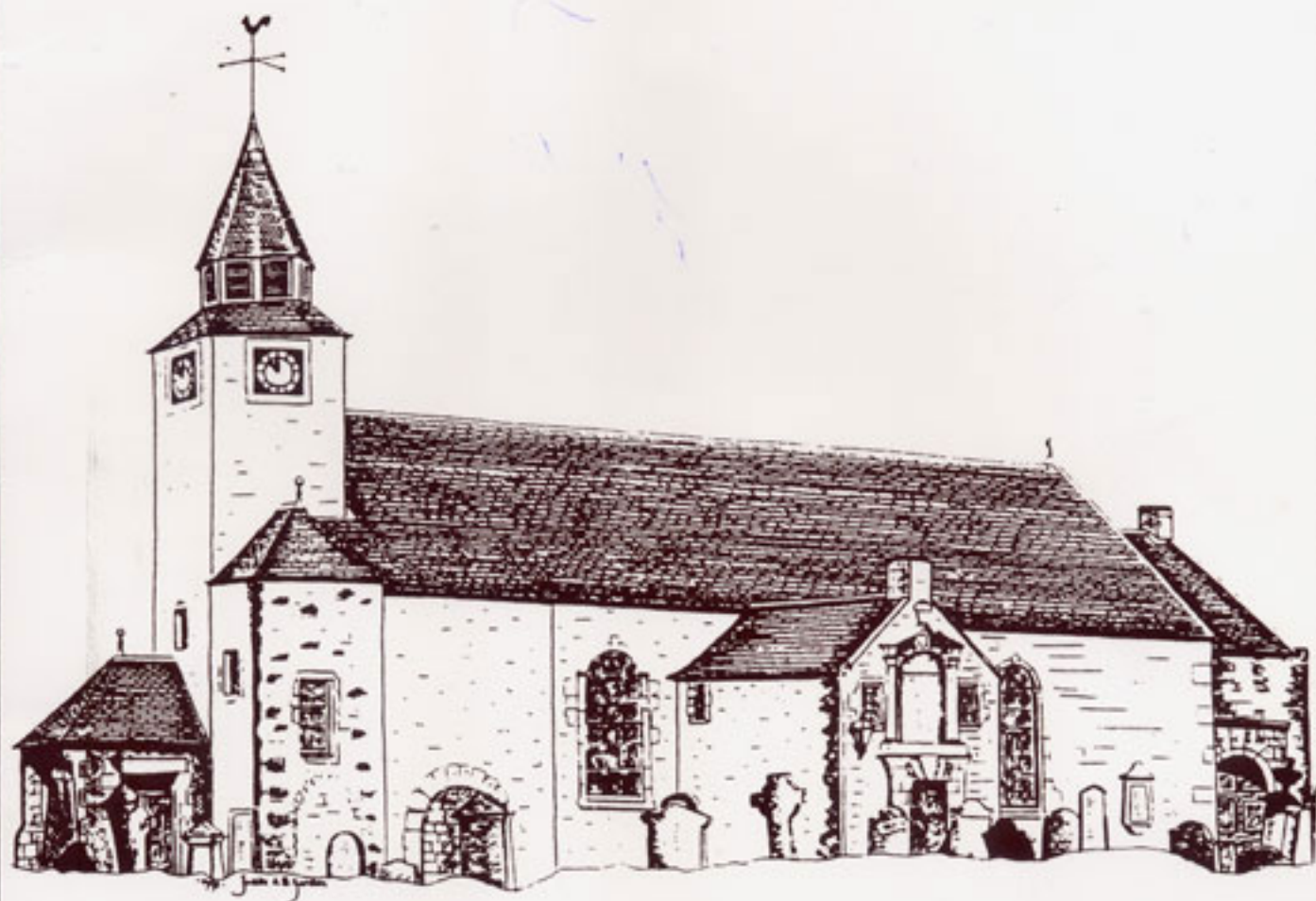


PRESTONGRANGE CHURCH



The first 400 years
1595-1995

We dedicate this booklet

to the Memory of

James Fraser McKenzie

Session Clerk of Prestongrange Church

1973 - 1986

without your "germ of an idea" Jimmy

this might never have happened.

Acknowledgements and Thanks
are extended to the following;

CONGREGATION OF PRESTONGRANGE.	memories and anecdotes
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FOREWORD

by Rev. Robert Simpson

At the time of writing I am the newest member of Prestongrange Church and its shortest serving minister. Though I hope that this double honour will not long continue, I mention it to indicate my poor claim to write an introduction to this booklet. I am less aware than most of the achievements of the great men and women of the church in Prestonpans, amongst them my 27 predecessors in Preston Church or Prestongrange, and 10 in the Free Church or Grange Church. Many further names can be recalled with pride and gratitude, but the lives of most of the thousands who laboured with them here in Christ's Kingdom have faded in the mists of time. As we shall too; but the good news of Christ Jesus will be told as it always has been from generation to generation of those who live in the Pans.

Since they will be too modest to claim credit for their work, I shall express all our gratitude to those who have worked hard to prepare this booklet. Margaret Baillie, William Davie, Sandra Marshall, Margaret Rankine, Jean Thomson and Ian Wallace (the team captain) have put in a great deal of work over many months. The fragments I have seen and heard, have left me eagerly looking forward to the result. For reminding us and for helping us to celebrate the lives of those who have been the church in Prestonpans we thank you all.

The 400th anniversary of a congregation deserves to be marked with a library, not just a booklet. And even though it is accompanied by a year of celebration, this booklet can only scratch the surface of the history we recall at this time. On the stage of Prestonpans every feature of the history of the Scotland and her Church has been acted out in microcosm.

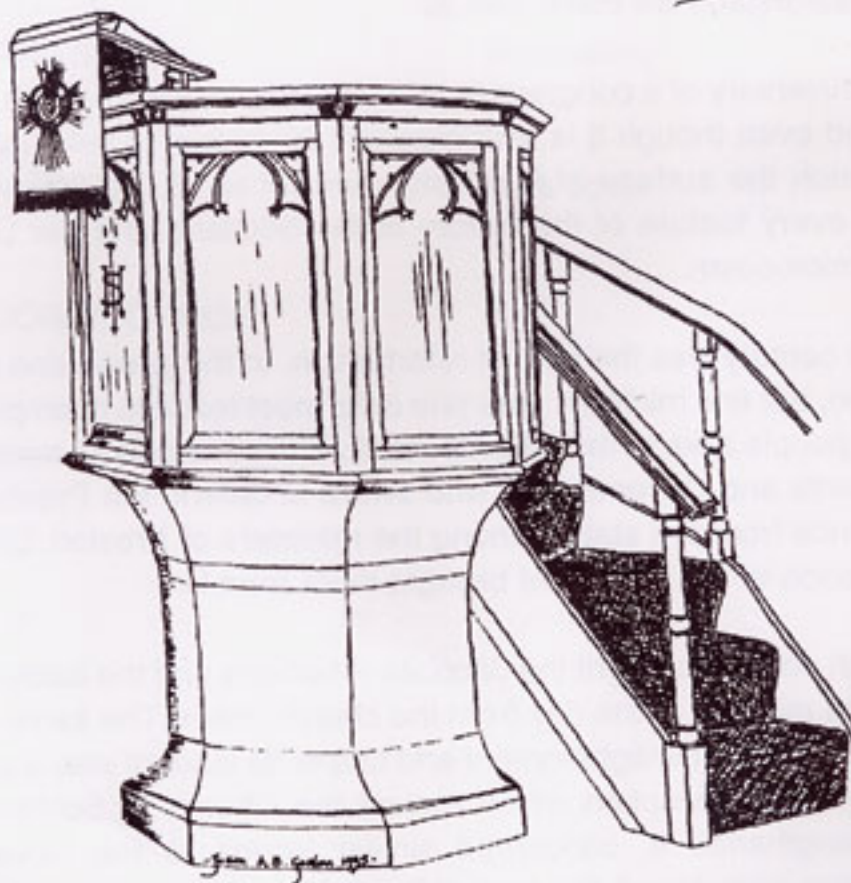
The sixteenth century was the time of reformation. In the generation after John Knox, John Davidson, our first minister, was one of its most fearless champions, calling King and common people alike to the reformed faith. The seventeenth century was the time of the Covenants and Covenanters, who swore to defend the Presbyterian faith and its independence from the state. Among the ministers of Preston Church were three whose adherence to the Covenant brought them trouble.

The eighteenth century brought the Jacobite rebellions and the battle of Prestonpans, watched by the minister of the day from the church tower. The same century saw the flowering of the Scottish enlightenment and one of its leaders was a son of the manse at Prestonpans. The disruption which rocked the Church of Scotland in 1843, and ultimately strengthened it, concerned similar issues to the Covenants. Here in Prestonpans the minister of the time left the Kirk and, supported by many of his parishioners, established the Free Church of Prestonpans.

The Free Church united with the Secession Churches in 1900 (United Presbyterian Church) and the resulting United Free Church re-united with the Church of Scotland in 1929. The name Grange Church dates from that time. Finally the union of Grange and Preston Churches in 1981 brings us into the memory of most of our members.

The history of the organised church is not always a pretty story. In fact the church can be its own worst enemy. However the light of the gospel has shone with relevance to every generation in these 400 years and will continue to do so. When John Davidson first preached at Salt Preston, he took as his text Matthew 4.16: "The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light." The Panners of the day, the people of the "populous townes of Preston, ye Grange and ye Panns" had been 50 years without a minister. The light which they had missed was not the minister, but the good news of Jesus Christ, who still offers full life and eternal life to all who will trust him. 400 years later we need the light of God's truth in our lives as much as ever and the church is there to share that light. As we look confidently forward, we thank God that "The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has never overcome it." (John 1.5)

Robert P. Simpson



JOHN DAVIDSON

Much has been written about the Minister who founded today's Church in Prestonpans but I would like to consider the man his times and if you like the providence that brought John Davidson to Prestonpans.

Davidson was born into a wealthy land owning family in Dunfermline in the Kingdom of Fife around 1549, some ten years before the start of the Scottish Reformation. He was therefore raised as a Roman Catholic although nothing is documented of his childhood.

Under the influence of David Ferguson an early reformed church minister Davidson gave himself to religion and to gaining a good education.

He entered St. Andrews University in 1566 attaching himself to St. Leonards gaining his Bachelors in 1569 and his Masters in 1570.

It should be noted that John Knox came to St. Andrews preaching each Sunday between July 1571 till August 1572. This would have had a profound effect on the young Davidson.

Davidson would have attended the General Assembly held in St. Andrews (March 6th 1572) and heard Knox oppose the introduction of Bishops in the Reformed church. A cause that would bring Davidson much grief for the rest of his life. This was the last Assembly attended by Knox as he died the following year in Edinburgh.

Over his lifetime Davidson published many poems his first in 1573 was in praise of John Knox.

His poetry got him into extremely hot water and he was castigated by the then Regent Morton for a poem (1574) dealing with the Crown's right to church property and the methods used to enhance the Crown's share of this wealth. Incurring the wrath of the regent by refusing to retract his poem he was forced to flee from Scotland for a period of some three years passing through England and onto Switzerland studying for a time at Basle University. He was allowed to return only after a strong plea was made on his behalf by the General Assembly.

Shortly after his return he was appointed minister of Liberton near Edinburgh. (1579) He was appointed as a commissioner to the assembly (1581) examining the accusations of ministers leading scandalous lives and was presented to King James who had now assumed the reins of government the following year. Davidson was to prove a very jaggy thorn in the King's side over the next 25 years.

He once again had to flee in 1584, this time to England because he had again crossed swords with the King by his association with the "Protestant Lords"

The King relented and on his return (1588) was offered his old charge but declined. Having finally broken the King's patience Davidson was Transferred to Haddington Presbytery and appointed to a small seaside town that had no minister for some fifty years. His charge had no church nor manse and he was banished to remain within the boundaries of what today is Prestonpans.

BRICKS AND MORTAR

The building that can be seen today bares little resemblance to the church built by Davidson circa 1600. The only visible parts of his church are the bell tower and part of the South wall which although covered by rendering has underneath, good ashlar masonry which dates to that period.

The church as it is today dates largely from the rebuilding of the church carried out at the latter part of the 18th century. (1774) The entrance to the original church is believed to have been in the north face of the building although today no trace can be found.



As can be seen from the line drawing made during the 19th century there were in fact two transept like buildings on the south wall of which only the Prestongrange Loft remains. This contained the family pew in its upper half whilst the lower half was the family vault. Today it contains the pipes for the church organ. The other transept was the porch which had a room or vestry above the door and a sun dial on its south-west corner. The porch was removed during the 1891 renovations and all that remains of this building is its outline on the south wall and the bricked up entrance to the main building. During this renovation the north wing was added.

The building at the south side of the tower contains the staircase to the upper galleries and to the clock tower and although a much later building than the tower itself it is very probably a reconstruction of the original staircase which led to the tower.

The present vestry and choir room were added after a fire destroyed the vestry which led from the west vestibule. (January 1975)

The only other building of note is that of the old session house which is at the front gate of the church. The wood panelling on the west wall depicts the names of old residents of the parish and shows the sums bequeathed by them for the benefit of the poor.

(this is explained further in Peter McNeill's Prestonpans and Vicinity)

Faithful records of proclamation of wedding banns were kept, often with interesting and enlightening remarks added:

28th February 1595: Proclaimed:

John Maling/Bessie Kinnimont : in ye meantime to keep na company together.

Man's Surname	Proclaimed	Husband and wife's names
Kerse	28th Nov.1595	Johne Kerse & Marionn Smythe

"Has promised to solemnize ye bands with posibull diligence"

Oliner	12th Feb.1601	Mr William O. & Elspeth Tod
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"Baith parischiners of Gulane being lawfullie proclaimed yair were maryit togedder in the Kirk of Saltprestonpannis and producit ane testimonial subscrybit be Mr Andru Makghe minister et Gulane gat yair wes na impediment"

NOTABILIA

20th April 1601

Compearit - as promised to desist from striking his wife.

1609 Baptism

Pont	Samuel	s	Robert Pont	Margaret Knox
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Witness:

*Mr Tacharie(Muir of Bower in
Caithness)*

(Grandson of John Knox)

Looking through the old church records we find there are many references to :

**EAST PANNIS
WESTERPANNIS
PRESTOUN
SALT PANS**

All of which give an instant picture of small self contained hamlets growing through the centuries to become

THE PANS.

The first Baptism recorded is baby Ninian Moore and reads:

<i>Surname</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>son</i>	<i>Father</i>	<i>Mother</i>	<i>Baptism</i>
<i>Moore</i>	<i>Ninian</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>Johne Moore</i>	<i>Margaret Marschell</i>	<i>21.10.1596</i>

Witnesses:

*Adam Weddell
Wm. Lyndsay
Thos. Petticruiff*

In the first year there were 45 more Baptisms



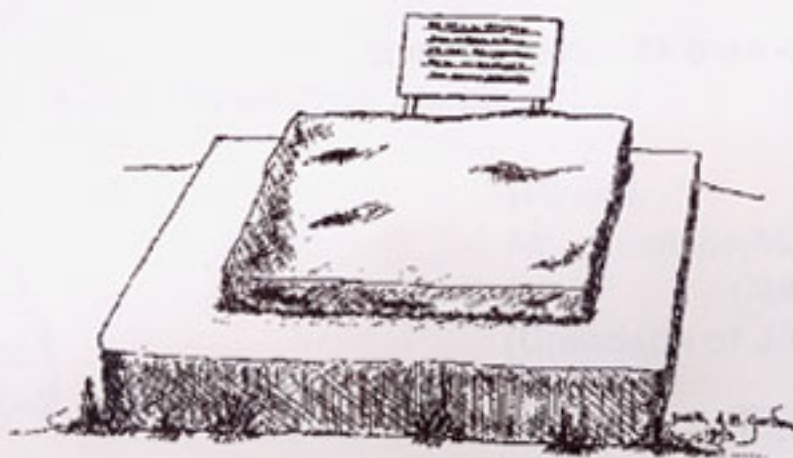
He raised the money to build the first church and manse, having obtained the land from the Hamilton family. Having known the benefits an education could bring he started the first school and on his death left money in his estate to ensure that a suitable schoolmaster could be employed.

*Mr Johne Davidsoun hes foundit in prestounpanis
ane schole for teiching of Latin, grek and hebrew
towngis and language, and for Instructing of youth
in vertue and learning.*

He died in 1604 not having been pardoned by the King and still confined to his parish but having established a thriving congregation that expanded with the town over the next four centuries.

Davidson was to his death admired for his personal piety and unflagging zeal as a minister yet embarrassed his fellow ministers with his frequent outbursts to the King. He was a man who would today be branded a trouble maker yet his banishment to Prestonpans was in every sense controlled by divine guidance.

In 1597 John Davidson,
first minister of Preston,
built this Church, Manse and
school. This stone he set above
the Manse door.



OCCUPATIONS

WEAVER	DR OF PHYSIC
COLLECTOR OF CUSTOMS	WRIGHT
SKIPPER	SMYTH
SHIPMAKER	SALTER
COILYEAR - COLLIER	CUTTELLORR
SHOEMAKER	CHOPMAN
SAILOR - SAILLER	GARDINER
DYER	FISHER - FISHERMAN
PLOWMAN	COACHMAN
MALTER	LABOURER
MARINER	MERCHANT
ADVOCATE	ARMOURER



IS YOUR FOREFATHER HERE?

READ THEM ALOUD IT'S EASIER

ACHESOUN OR ACHESONE OR ACHESUN

LYNDSAY

WILSONN

GOLYNDE

MACKLAIR

CHASTEROUS OR CHASTERIS

SEATOUN OR SETON

SMYTHE

MARJORIBANKS

CARBRAITH

RIPPETH

PEDDEN

PHINLAY

RAMMAGHE

SPANKIE

STAIG

BELLFIELD

CANYE

CADELL

PETTICRUIFF

SCHADOWYE OR SCHADOWIE

LARGO



And there were Thomsons, Grundysons, Browns, Youngs. Lawsons, Weddells, Dicksons, Cockburns, Griersons etc. all found within the church records examined.

"John and William Pates being called it was intimated to John by the Moderator that his son William having been playing frequently upon the Lord's Day and for enticing and enfarng other people's children in the neighbourhood to do the fame (same)..... the session had convened him before them to be admonished and exhorted to keep his son under a sticker Discipline, and to take more care to have him within doors upon the Lord's day."

Elders were even appointed to check the parish on Sunday evenings to

"observe those that abuse the Lord's day by idling it away in the fields or by walking or otherwise."

Margaret Finn and Elizabeth Walker, both wives of salters and resident in the "Cuttle", appeared before the session accused of "scolding and fighting" there. Witnesses told of Margaret Finn's bleeding Margaret Walker by dashing her head against the Salt-pan and cutting her face on it. Both women promised to behave better or risk public rebuke before the congregation.

Some examples from later in the century show that change came slowly.

At the rebuilding of the church in 1774 the price of seats in the gallery and the area that a bottom could take up was fixed at 18" x 26" payable in proportion to the area occupied. To be paid each Whitsunday.

Dr Struthers notes in his research that the Session Clerk of around 1725, a Mr William Adam mislaid several of the important documents of the Kirk Session. He indicates that no trace can be found of them in 1850.

Due to an Act of Parliament 28th April 1795 the Church had to raise one man to serve in the Navy. The advert offered 20 Guineas to any volunteer.



Examples:

In October 1716 Archibald White, an elder was accused of drunkenness on the Lord's Day four and a half years before .

In November he cited an

"Act of the General Assembly, appointing a scandal to expire in four years so as it ought not be enquired into nor revived any more".

In December's Session minutes we read

"The sefsion considering the Defence made by Archibald Whyte why they should not proceed in this affair do find that the time mentioned in the Act of the General Assembly is five years to which his case comes not up, and therefor resolve to proceed."

A committee of elders considered the evidence, found that he had shown a very bad example, admonished him and asked for a solemn promise

"to guard against the like in times to come".

His accuser who had brought the charge against him after he had rebuked her mother for misbehaviour on the Sabbath, was also

"gravely admonished to guard against such practices in time coming" and "study a meek and modest and Christian carriage at all times"

In 1718 Thomas Greg appeared before the session and

"acknowledged his being guilty of fornication with Helen Wedderburn daughter of John Wedderburn weaver in Prefton and that he was the father of the child brought forth by her. he was exhorted to serious repentance and appointed to compear(appear) and make satisfaction for his said sin upon the publick place of Repentance upon Sabbath next"

"John Grant, collier with Grange was guilty of Drunkennefs Curfing and Swearing and beating his wife and raifing one uproar in the town upon Wednefday, and that upon the Lord's Day before the Sacrament he was dancing before the door in his drunkenness..."

"SAINTS AND SINNERS"



A snapshot of the church in the 17th and 18th century

Records kept by the treasurer and clerk show that the Kirk was involved in saving bodies and souls , with many functions of the modern social services being discharged by the session.

Regular payments were made to the aged ,poor orphaned sick and disabled - but with frequent bills for "*removing a cripple to Cockenny* " (or Tranent or Seaton) The fee in 1704 was 4s!

One interesting charitable deed is recorded thus in 1705:

"May 8 To the releasing John Thomson from the Turks slavery £20.00.00"

Saving souls , to the Kirk Session, meant ensuring attendance at Sunday worship, good behaviour in the street, and at home:

in some respects session minutes read like tabloid journalism, with accounts of slagging-matches between neighbours and "irregular" marriages.

12th March 1618

Purchase of Communion cups at 4/- each.

14th May 1690 Baptism

Fleucher Jean d Alexander F. Janet Young 14.5.1690
(father salter in the Lowmond Panns)

February 1741

The Moderator informed the session that collector Cheap had bought a quantity of oats amounting to 220 bols and that they put into a house in Port Seaton and that some of the oats had been made into meal. The Kirk Session agreed to give their weekly Pensioners meal instead of money.

March 1741

This day the Kirk Session agreed to give the keys of the meal gimel to Robert Skirvin.

January 1743

Compeared Helen Grant accused of drunkenness and confest her fault and promised to guard against it in all time.

November 1743

Mrs Lam confest that she had called Janet Cuthbertson - A THIEF and bit her arm and Janet confest that she called Mrs Lam an adulterous whore.

1746

Giles Mowat compeared to confess that she had gone for a muctchkin of ale to her husband.- Rebuked and dismissed her.

1751

Rebeckah Simpson appeared on the place of public repentance a second time.

1754

Isabel Bruce & Margaret Christy were cited to this dyet for scolding one another, the former of whom acknowledged she had been guilty in her passion.