

The Tapestry Background

The saga of Prince Charles Edward's campaign in 1745 is as enduring as that of William the Bastard, Duke of Normandy and King of England from 1066. Both sought to recover a nation's crown that had been snatched away from them by 'usurpers'.

William had been usurped by Harold despite his knowing full well that King Edward the Confessor had originally bequeathed the throne to William. The Stuart's direct line of male descent suffered serial usurpation. They were first displaced by the Act of Settlement in the English Parliament because the Prince's grandfather King James II and VII was a Catholic, his second wife was a Catholic and their male heir had just been born in 1688. There was no appetite in England for Catholicism at that time and thenceforth Catholics were barred from all right to sit upon the throne. The male Catholic Stuart line was displaced in favour first of the female children of James II and VII's first marriage to Protestant Anne Hyde. The eldest daughter became Queen Mary II [1689-1694] and her husband, a Dutch Prince, joint sovereign as William III and II [1689-1702]; and they were succeeded by Queen Mary's younger sister who became Queen Anne [1702-1714]. Thereafter, since Queen Anne had no children, the Electors of Hanover, distant Protestant cousins, took the crown as direct descendants of Elizabeth, sister of the Stuart King Charles I whom Parliament had executed in 1649.

There were several bold attempts most particularly in 1689 and 1715 to restore the male Stuart line in the person of James II and VII himself and his son James III and VIII – the Old Pretender. But none came so near to success as the campaign James III and VIII's son Prince Charles Edward, *aka* Bonnie Prince Charlie or the Young Pretender, waged in 1745.

La Tapisserie de la Reine Mathilde

The success of King William I of England at Hastings in 1066 was at great cost in battle, and the Pope required of William that as penance he build an Abbey part of which survived Henry VIII's Dissolution and stands to this

day on the field where King Harold was slain – at Battle in Sussex. William's wife, Queen Mathilde went further however to oversee the creation of one of the world's most famous works of art – the Bayeux Tapestry also known as *La Tapisserie de la Reine Mathilde*. Under the supervision of William's half-brother, Earl of Kent and Bishop Odo of Bayeux [some say it was the inspiration of the late King Harold's ambitious sister Edith], 230 feet by twenty inches of the finest embroidery was stitched. It tells the saga of usurpation and William's 'just' invasion to secure his inheritance. It was created [probably at Canterbury] to decorate the walls of Bishop Odo's newly consecrated Cathedral of Bayeux in 1077 – just 11 years after William's Victory. The tapestry has never left France and it has only left Bayeux twice. On both occasions it was to be exhibited in Paris – firstly to celebrate the proclamation of Napoleon I as Emperor in 1804, and secondly to celebrate France's Liberation in 1944 – which had appropriately arrived through Normandy.

Much more has certainly been written about the '45 and the role Prince Charles Edward and the Highland Clan Chiefs played in it than of William at Hastings, but until 2008 embroidery on the scale of Bayeux had not been envisaged to tell of his saga. The belief that it could and should be accomplished followed a chance visit to Bayeux by members of the Battle of Prestonpans 1745 Heritage Trust allied to Prestonpans growing reputation as an emerging centre for community arts. The arts in myriad forms whether painting, poetry, writing, music, singing, sculpture, story telling or theatre had for a decade been a deliberate vehicle for post-industrial socioeconomic regeneration of Prestonpans under the umbrella of the Prestoungrange Arts Festival Trust. Furthermore, their focus had been the millennium history of the town – since William the Conqueror in fact. In turn the Viking and monastic origins of the town, its early coal mining and salt making, its oyster farming, its glassworks and chemical industries, its potteries, its soap making and brewing, its market gardening and brick making were all honoured in mural art. The town's sad record of witch persecution in the reigns of Queen Mary and James VI was commemorated in theatre and literature. And from 2006

Prince Charles Edward's astonishing Victory in the town has been honoured too.

Researching the Prince's Campaign

It was apparent from the outset to members of the Prestoungrange Arts Festival that appropriate conservation, interpretation and presentation of the Battle of Prestonpans on September 21st 1745 was a matter for the Scottish nation at large. Panners, indwellers of Prestonpans, are but stewards of the legacy. Accordingly a discrete Battle of Prestonpans 1745 Heritage Trust was founded which has always seen its responsibility was to involve the whole nation, building nevertheless on the abundant strengths of the town's arts community. The occasional remembrance of the battle, at 100th, 200th and 250th anniversaries had been successful but the Trust believed a permanent, living history approach was proper for the 21st century. Accordingly to address that *Dream*, for that was what we chose to call it, we began with an audit of all that had been essayed across the previous 265 years. This included the works of artists, the novels of Scott and Stephenson and hundreds more, the poetry and the songs and anthems sung, the films and videos, the local memorials to Colonel Gardiner and the thorn tree beneath which he was mortally wounded, the cairn where many of those who died were finally laid to rest, the BattleBing that stands at Meadow Mill just north of the A1 Great North Road close by the battle site with panoramic views of the entire sequence of manoeuvres by both armies, the contemporary diaries and memoirs, the Proceedings of the Court of Enquiry Field Marshal Wade convened that exonerated Sir John Cope for his crushing defeat, the Trial of Lord Provost Stuart of Edinburgh, and finally the researches and opinions of hundreds of historians across the intervening years. In this latter respect the Trust was especially fortunate that a US human rights lawyer, Martin Margulies, with a holiday home on South Uist close by Eriskay where the Prince first landed on 23rd July 1745, had brought his analytical skills to the same task as the Trustees. In the very same year that the Battle Trust was launched Martin Margulies published the first and only scholarly work exclusively devoted to, and entitled, *The Battle of Prestonpans 1745*.

Martin Margulies's study, and Stephen Lord's work in *Walking With Charlie*, which reported how Lord had walked the very route the Prince had taken through the Highlands in 1745, became the prime sources for the events depicted in the The Prestonpans Tapestry as pictured on the pages of this book. But the tapestry also tells of Sir John Cope's unsuccessful attempt to head off the Prince in the Highlands in July and August and of the barges he took from Aberdeen to Dunbar – too late to save Edinburgh but

sufficient to place his army between the Prince and England in mid September and ready for battle at Prestonpans.

Another distinguished scholar has also supported the Trust's work. With a grant from the Heritage Lottery Dr Tony Pollard and colleagues from Glasgow University's Battlefield Archaeology Centre have conducted a careful examination of the battle site and been able to suggest that, from artefacts found, the precise location of the initial clash was close by Seton Farm East. They have also been able to evaluate the gravity Waggonway that ran across the subsequent field of battle, carrying coal downhill from Tranent to Cockenzie Harbour – which was indeed Scotland's first railway.

Living History in Action

A significant programme of annual September re-enactments of known cameos of the battle was instituted in 2007 with the support of appropriately uniformed volunteers from the Czech Republic, Holland, Ireland, Wales, England and of course Scotland itself. The re-enactors dined at Holyroodhouse Palace. In Prestonpans an extensive mural was painted at the town's primary school. Under the leadership of 'Colonel' Adam Watters with the support of the Pipes and Drums of the Royal British Legion, the Alan Breck Regiment of Prestonpans Volunteers has been raised. Martin Margulies became its first 'Colonel-in-Chief'. A young man precisely the same age as the Prince in 1745, Arran Johnston, has role played the Prince himself since the outset. All the local battle scenes depicted on the tapestry panels have been re-enacted to the ever growing enjoyment of the community of Prestonpans and visitors from afar. On the occasion of The Gathering and Scotland's Homecoming in 2009 the Trust's Exhibition of The Princes' Clans who came out at Prestonpans attracted descendants from as far away as New Zealand.

Theatre has made a major contribution with two plays from Aberlady born BAFTA Winner Andrew Dallmeyer – *The Battle of Pots 'n Pans* which toured and went on to the Edinburgh Fringe, and *Colonel Gardiner – Vice and Virtue*. So too has the encouragement of novelists under the local Cuthill Press imprint to create new novels, with Sharon Dabell's *A Backward Glance* and Roy Pugh's *The White Rose and the Thorn Tree*. Gordon Prestoungrange has also contributed his own novel, *A Baron's Tale*, telling of William Grant's involvement at the time and later as Lord Advocate.

In 2009 the Trust received a grant from the Scottish Arts Council and Awards for All that enabled Greg Dawson-Allen to become Story Teller of

the Battle taking the tale to schools across the county and beyond. In the programme of School Visits he was joined by Adam Watters and by local resident Gordon Veitch, twice European BattleGaming Champion. On behalf of the Trust Gordon Veitch has constructed a 10ft x 8 ft topographical representation of Prestonpans and the battlefield in 1745. On the boards by the throw of the dice Cope and the Prince do battle once again and annual championship competitions are arranged.

Designing and Stitching The Prestonpans Tapestry

Andrew Crummy, Convenor of the Prestoungrange Arts Festival for most of the decade, was the principal artist and illustrator of the tapestry. The stitching of the embroidery was led by Dorie Wilkie. The whole was co-ordinated administratively by Gillian Hart who was also the principal photographer. The stitching was shared across Scotland and around the world by more than 200 volunteers each of whom has their tag in the bottom right hand corner of their panel. Recruiting the stitchers was undertaken in the initial stages by Sylvia Burgess. Webmaster was Gordon Prestoungrange.

Andrew Crummy is an accomplished artist in many media and at an early stage in his life worked as an illustrator. As such he was not daunted by the challenge to create all the artwork for the many panels to a consistent style. But what style to choose? He began with the famous 18th century cartoon of Cope confirming his own defeat to Lord Kerr at Berwick on Tweed and developed that. He created black pencil sketches which were then subject to 'sign off' wherever possible in the communities across Scotland where the Prince and Cope travelled. He was determined that each locality should make its own contribution, and tell its own version of the events depicted. This was never more important than when several versions were abroad, such as where precisely at Glenfinnan was the Prince's standard raised and by whom? Or which rose bush at Fassfern was the origin of the white cockade? Equally it was important to seek to find the 18th century exteriors of buildings many since demolished such as the Netherbow Port and Preston House; derelict as at High Bridge and Ruthven Barracks; or extensively altered such as Blair Castle, Balhaldie House, Kinlochmoidart House, the Salutation Inn in Perth, the Cottage at Duddingston and Tranent Church. To assist all this, focussed book and internet research and seemingly endless cross-examination of Martin Margulies lasted for fully nine months. Architect Gareth Bryn-Jones was deeply involved, on occasions 'estimating' how a building might have appeared mid-18th century. Field visits around the Highlands were arranged in village halls and centres, most particularly at Eriskay, Arisaig,

Borrodale, Glenfinnan, High Bridge, Ruthven, Blair Castle and Dunblane.

Next there was the question of which wools to use to create a tapestry that could last a thousand years and on which linen to embroider it. Andrew Crummy knew he wanted subdued Scottish hues, but the red coats of the Hanoverian government's troops were often in danger of dominating the panels. Panel stitchers were also invited to networking workshops and 'problem clinics', with senior stitchers across the country assisting closer to the work in hand. A core team led by Dorie Wilkie also addressed the challenge of sewing the panels together since each is embroidered separately; and the most appropriate backing for the linen and how best to hang it in exhibition – for which Velcro was adopted.

The question was sometimes raised as to whether such a project could be accomplished in just 24 months from start to exhibition. The Trust took the view of Adam Smith that, so long as there was a division of labour, it could. But with post-Smithsonian managerial insight, the questions raised by the logistics of supporting such widely dispersed stitchers and the eventual challenge of a touring exhibition were addressed by a special task group. Nodes on the critical path were identified and resourced as appropriate to avoid bottlenecks.

Why stop at the Prince's Victory in Prestonpans?

Unlike William I of England, the Prince's campaign was not ultimately crowned with success. At Culloden the Prince and the Highland Clans were defeated. The Hanoverian government went on to ensure that the loyalty and support on which the Prince had been able to draw for his success were destroyed for ever. At Westminster they even banned the wearing of the tartan and playing of the pipes. Yet paradoxically in so doing they created the abiding and romanticised myth of the Prince, and provided a touchstone for much that is universally recognised as distinctive about Scotland today – not least those 'illegal' tartans and the pipes.

The National Trust for Scotland has most recently created a major new visitor centre at Culloden that tells the comprehensive and turbulent Jacobite story. It began when Henry VIII's sister married the Scottish King and shows how this eventually led by male descent after the death of Queen Elizabeth I to the ascension to the throne of England of Scotland's then ruling King James VI, the son of Mary Queen of Scots. His son, Charles I, lost his head to Parliament, and following the interregnum with the two Cromwells as Lord Protector, King Charles II and then his brother James II and VII ruled before the 'Glorious Revolution' saw James abdicate and flee

into exile. It continues with the tales of the Uprisings from 1689 till 1746 and then to the end of the lives of Prince Charles Edward and his younger brother Cardinal Prince Henry in Rome. In so doing, in telling the whole story, the significance of the Prince's campaign to Victory at Prestonpans all too frequently gets lost amidst myriad other details. In Prestonpans it is our particular ambition to ensure that does not happen.

It is our conviction and belief in Prestonpans that the Prince's quite extraordinary campaign leading to his Victory on September 21st 1745 can be and should be exemplified in its own right.

A young man of 24 turning 25 arrived with 7 supporters in the Outer Hebrides full of Hope and Ambition. From that seemingly improbable start, advised to "Go Home" immediately on arrival, he wrote letters to Clan Chiefs from Borrodale House, raised his Standard at Glenfinnan after less than a month to be joined there first by Cameron of Lochiel and then a further 2000 Clansmen. He took Edinburgh some eight weeks after landing. He had Scotland at his feet and defeated Cope at Prestonpans in an astonishing encounter that lasted no more than fifteen minutes.

It is our assertion in Prestonpans today that Prince Charles Edward set an example every young person can seek to follow in their lives. He identified what he believed to be right, he committed himself to it completely, he motivated older and wiser men than he to join him, and he achieved Victory. The fact that the later stages of his campaign failed was no justification for not striving for what he believed to be right. True there is a moral to the story in that his timing was right to begin, and would have been right to have pressed ahead from Derby even though the promised support from France was delayed. But once he had turned back from Derby there was never any hope he might have succeeded. So timing and retaining the initiative are perhaps the abiding lessons to be internalised.

Hope, Ambition & Victory are synonymous with Prestonpans – then and now

So to the final question asked. It is one which, if The Trust had worried unduly about its answer would have ensured embroidering the tapestry never began.

Where is our soon to be consecrated cathedral of Bayeux provided by the Earl of Kent Bishop Odo, half-brother to the Bastard Duke, the conquering King William I? Where will we display The Prestonpans Tapestry when completed? Will the Lord provide?

The Trust's answer is both straightforward and ambitious. We expect it to hang in the future Prestonpans Living History Centre which is not yet constructed nor even funded. But when it is, as it surely will be, The Prestonpans Tapestry will be one of its key exhibits that will bring thousands of visitors, young children in particular, to Prestonpans to hear and learn exactly what the 24 turning 25 year old Prince achieved in just eight weeks.

Battle Trustee, architect and artist Gareth Bryn-Jones has worked with structural engineers and internationally acclaimed interior designers *haleysharp* to explore and present how the Living History Centre can ideally be created as an extension of the BattleBing already in place. There are several alternative locations such as the town's extensive Heritage Museum which the Trust is also considering. In the meantime however, it is the Trust's intention to 'parade' The Prestonpans Tapestry far and wide, anywhere and everywhere audiences are interested to hear its message of Youthful Hope and Ambition and just precisely what Victory can be achieved.

Our message has been derided by a few thoughtful critics as delusional, as denying the ultimate reality of the Prince's campaign i.e. that it failed. We absolutely beg to differ in post-industrial Prestonpans. The fact that *'the best laid schemes o' mice an' men gang aft agley'* never was or ever shall be an alibi for not striving in a positive frame of mind to achieve what is important to one's life. Hundreds of hands moving to a shared goal across the Scottish nation have made the point. They have stitched for more than 15,000 hours to create the world's longest embroidered artwork at 104 metres – The Prestonpans Tapestry. Their stunning creation shall surely be our beacon for generations to come.

Dr Gordon Prestoungrange
Baron of Prestoungrange
 Chairman: Battle of Prestonpans 1745 Heritage Trust