

The Scottish Barony Register

The Scottish Barony Register is run by retired solicitor, Alastair Shepherd, and the body has issued their 2024 Annual Report.

This important list was established some twenty years ago, when feudal law was largely abolished in Scotland on 28 November 2004, “the Appointed Day”. Mr Shepherd has been Custodian of the Register for four of those twenty years.

The Register exists to record assignments of the feudal dignity of baron, as after the Appointed Day these could no longer be recorded in the Sasine or Land Register of Scotland.

In the 2024 report, Mr Shepherd mentions that some eleven of the thirteen registrations this year are new to the Register. Two of the new registrations related to the sale and purchase of a Scottish country estate. The agents involved in both sales realised that the existence of a barony title considerably enhanced the value of the estate.

Mr Shepherd also came across an interesting feudal survivor this year.

He said: “This is the first time the Register has been asked to record an hereditary sheriffdom. Prior to 1745, the office of Sheriff was passed down from father to son in just a few aristocratic families. The Sheriff would generally appoint a Depute to actually administer justice. I did find it quite amusing that the family concerned had passed this ancient office down to future generations, perhaps in case the government decided to amend the 1746 decision.”

The Register now holds records for 201 barony titles. It is apparently possible for the title holder to add the title into their name, (although it is not considered a peerage title). For example the first on the list is Harold Peerenboom, Baron of Abbotshall.

The heraldry or coats of arms for Scottish baronies is governed by the Court of the Lord Lyon.



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